

LT. WILLIAM J. WOLFGRAM
MEMORIAL LIBRARY



Widener College

*Lieutenant William J. Wolfgram
English Reference Library*



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2023 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation



The Turk's Head Edition of the Works of Oliver Goldsmith is limited to one thousand signed and numbered sets, of which this is

Number 4-----

We guarantee that no limited, numbered edition, other than The Turk's Head, shall be printed from these plates.

The written number must correspond with the perforated number at the top of the page.

G. P. Putnam's Sons

The Works of Oliver Goldsmith

Edited by
Peter Cunningham, F. S. A.

With a Biographical and Critical Introduction
by
Horatio Sheafe Krans, Ph.D.

With Eighty Photogravures from Original Designs
by
Frederick Simpson Coburn

In Ten Volumes

Volume Five

The Citizen of the World
(*Concluded*)

G. P. Putnam's Sons
New York and London
The Knickerbocker Press

WOLF
PR 3481
.C8
1908
v. 5

COPYRIGHT, 1908

BY

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

(For Introduction and Designs)

WIDENER COLLEGE
LIBRARY
CHESTER, PENNSYLVANIA

107014
(v. 5)

DISCARDED

The Knickerbocker Press, New York

CONTENTS

NO. OF LETTER	PAGE
LIX. The Chinese Philosopher's son escapes with the beautiful captive from slavery	3
LX. The history of the beautiful captive	7
LXI. Proper lessons to a youth entering the world, with fables suited to the occasion	15
LXII. An authentic history of Catherina Alexowna, wife of Peter the Great	21
LXIII. The rise or the decline of literature not dependent on man, but resulting from the vicissitudes of nature	29
LXIV. The great exchange happiness for show—Their folly in this respect of use to society	35
LXV. The history of a philosophic cobbler	39
LXVI. The difference between love and gratitude	44
LXVII. The folly of attempting to learn wisdom by being recluse	51
LXVIII. Quacks ridiculed—Some particularly mentioned	56
LXIX. The fear of mad dogs ridiculed	63
LXX. Fortune proved not to be blind—The story of the avaricious miller	70
LXXI. The Shabby Beau, the Man in Black, the Chinese Philosopher, etc., at Vauxhall	75
LXXII. The Marriage Act censured	83
LXXIII. Life endeared by age	90
LXXIV. The description of a little great man	96

NO. OF LETTER	PAGE
LXXV. The necessity of amusing each other with new books insisted upon	101
LXXVI. The preference of grace to beauty—An alle- gory	107
LXXVII. The behaviour of a shopkeeper and his jour- neyman	113
LXXVIII. The French ridiculed after their own manner	117
LXXIX. The preparations of both theatres for a winter campaign	121
LXXX. The evil tendency of increasing penal laws, or enforcing even those already in being with rigour	126
LXXXI. The ladies' trains ridiculed	132
LXXXII. The sciences useful in a popular state, preju- dicial in a barbarous one	137
LXXXIII. Some cautions on life, taken from a modern philosopher of China	145
LXXXIV. The anecdotes of several poets, who lived and died in circumstances of wretchedness	150
LXXXV. The trifling squabbles of stage-players ridi- culed	155
LXXXVI. The races of Newmarket ridiculed—Descrip- tion of a cart-race	162
LXXXVII. The folly of the western parts of Europe in employing the Russians to fight their battles	167
LXXXVIII. The ladies advised to get husbands—A story to this purpose	171
LXXXIX. The folly of remote or useless disquisitions among the learned	177
xc. The English subject to the spleen	183
xcI. The influence of climate and soil upon the temper and dispositions of the English	189
xcII. The manner in which some philosophers make artificial misery	194

Contents

v

NO. OF LETTER	PAGE
XCIII. The fondness of some to admire the writings of lords, etc.	199
XCIV. The Philosopher's son is again separated from his beautiful companion	203
XCv. The father consoles him upon this occasion	207
xcvi. The condolence and congratulation upon the death of the late King ridiculed—English mourning described	210
xcvii. Almost every subject of literature has been already exhausted	216
xcviii. A description of the courts of justice in Westminster Hall	221
xcix. A visit from the Little Beau—The indulgence with which the fair sex are treated in several parts of Asia	226
c. A life of independence praised	231
ci. That people must be contented to be guided by those whom they have appointed to govern—A story to this effect	236
cii. The passion for gaming among ladies ridiculed	241
ciii. The Chinese Philosopher begins to think of quitting England	244
civ. The arts some make use of to appear learned	247
cv. The intended coronation described	252
cvi. Funeral elegies written upon the great ridiculed—A specimen of one	258
cvii. The English too fond of believing every report without examination—A story of an incendiary to this purpose	262
cviii. The utility and entertainment that might result from a journey into the east	267
cix. The Chinese Philosopher attempts to find out famous men	273
cx. Some projects for introducing Asiatic employments into the courts of England	279

NO. OF LETTER	PAGE
CXI. On the different sects in England—Particularly Methodism	285
CXII. An election described	290
CXIII. A literary contest of great importance in which both sides fight by epigram	295
CXIV. Against the Marriage Act—A fable	302
CXV. On the danger of having too high an opinion of human nature	309
CXVI. Whether love be a natural or fictitious passion	314
CXVII. A city night-piece	320
CXVIII. On the meanness of the Dutch at the court of Japan	324
CXIX. On the distresses of the poor—Exemplified in the life of a common soldier	329
CXX. On the absurdity of some late English titles	337
CXXI. The irresolution of the English accounted for	341
CXXII. The manner of travellers in their usual relations ridiculed	344
CXXIII. The conclusion	351

ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
" <i>We fled northward toward the Kingdom of Circassia</i> " <i>Frontispiece</i>	
" <i>A well-timed shrug, an admiring attitude</i> " .	24
" <i>I lately went to see the entry of a foreign ambassador</i> "	40
<i>Vauxhall Gardens</i>	78
" <i>In a morning gown and a flannel night-cap, earnestly employed in learning to blow the German flute</i> "	186
" <i>I could not avoid observing the assiduity of Mr. Burchell in assisting my daughter Sophia in her part of the work</i> " .	204

	PAGE
<i>"Though I praise their moderation at play, I must not conceal their assiduity"</i> . . .	242
<i>"The robber walks his midnight round"</i> . . .	320



Rosamond's Pond, St. James Park, in 1744.
From a drawing by George Cruikshank.

LETTERS OF
A CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

(Concluded)

LETTER LIX

THE CHINESE PHILOSOPHER'S SON ESCAPES WITH THE BEAUTIFUL CAPTIVE FROM SLAVERY

From Hingpo to Lien Chi Altangi, by the way of Moscow

YOU will probably be pleased to see my letter dated from Terki, a city which lies beyond the bounds of the Persian empire. Here, blessed with security, with all that is dear, I double my raptures by communicating them to you; the mind sympathising with the freedom of the body, my whole soul is dilated in gratitude, love, and praise.

Yet were my own happiness all that inspired my present joy, my raptures might justly merit the imputation of self-interest; but when I think that the beautiful Zelis is also free, forgive my triumph when I boast of having rescued from captivity the most deserving object upon earth.

You remember the reluctance she testified at being obliged to marry the tyrant she hated. Her compliance at last was only feigned, in order to gain time to try some future means of escape.

During the interval between her promise and the intended performance of it, she came undiscovered one evening to the place where I generally retired after the fatigues of the day: her appearance was like that of an aerial genius, when it descends to minister comfort to undeserved distress; the mild lustre of her eye served to banish my timidity; her accents were sweeter than the echo of some distant symphony! "Unhappy stranger," said she, in the Persian language, "you here perceive one more wretched than thyself! All this solemnity of preparation, this elegance of dress, and the number of my attendants, serve but to increase my miseries. If you have courage to rescue an unhappy woman from approaching ruin, and our detested tyrant, you may depend upon my future gratitude." I bowed to the ground, and she left me filled with rapture and astonishment. Night brought no rest, nor could the ensuing morning calm the anxieties of my mind. I projected a thousand methods for her delivery; but each, when strictly examined, appeared impracticable: in this uncertainty the evening again arrived, and I placed myself on my former station in hopes of a repeated visit. After some short expectation, the bright perfection again appeared. I bowed as before to the ground; when, raising me up, she observed that the time was not to be spent in useless ceremony; she observed that the day following was appointed for the celebration of her nuptials, and that something was to be done that very night for our mutual

deliverance. I offered with the utmost humility to pursue whatever scheme she could direct: upon which she proposed that instant to scale the garden wall, adding that she had prevailed upon a female slave, who was now waiting at the appointed place to assist her with a ladder.

Pursuant to this information, I led her trembling to the place appointed; but, instead of the slave we expected to see, Mostadad himself was there awaiting our arrival. The wretch in whom we confided, it seems, had betrayed our design to her master, and he now saw the most convincing proofs of her information. He was just going to draw his sabre, when a principle of avarice repressed his fury, and he resolved, after a severe chastisement, to dispose of me to another master; in the mean time he ordered me to be confined in the strictest manner, and the next day to receive a hundred blows on the soles of my feet.

When the morning came, I was led out in order to receive the punishment, which, from the severity with which it is generally inflicted upon slaves, is worse even than death.

A trumpet was to be the signal for the solemnisation of the nuptials of Zelis, and for the infliction of my punishment. Each ceremony, to me equally dreadful, was just going to begin, when we were informed that a large body of Circassian Tartars had invaded the town, and were laying all in ruin. Every person now thought only of saving himself. I instantly unloosened the cords with which I was

bound, and, seizing a scimitar from one of the slaves who had not courage to resist me, flew to the women's apartment where Zelis was confined, dressed out for the intended nuptials. I bade her follow me without delay, and going forward cut my way through eunuchs, who made but a faint resistance. The whole city was now a scene of conflagration and terror; every person was willing to save himself, unmindful of others. In this confusion, seizing upon two of the fleetest coursers in the stable of Mostadad, we fled northward towards the kingdom of Circassia. As there were several others flying in the same manner, we passed without notice, and in three days arrived at Terki, a city that lies in a valley within the bosom of the frowning mountains of Caucasus. Here, free from every apprehension of danger, we enjoy all those satisfactions which are consistent with virtue; though I find my heart at intervals give way to unusual passions, yet such is my admiration for my fair companion that I lose even tenderness in distant respect. Though her person demands particular regard even among the beauties of Circassia, yet is her mind far more lovely. How very different is a woman who thus has cultivated her understanding, and been refined into delicacy of sentiment, from the daughters of the East, whose education is only formed to improve the person, and make them more tempting objects of prostitution. Adieu.

LETTER LX

THE HISTORY OF THE BEAUTIFUL CAPTIVE

From Hingpo to Lien Chi Aliangi, by the way of Moscow

WHEN sufficiently refreshed after the fatigues of our precipitate flight, my curiosity, which had been restrained by the appearance of immediate danger, now began to revive. I longed to know by what distressful accidents my fair fugitive became a captive, and could not avoid testifying a surprise how so much beauty could be involved in the calamities from whence she had been so lately rescued.

“Talk not of personal charms,” cried she with emotion, “since to them I owe every misfortune. Look round on the numberless beauties of the country where we are, and see how nature has poured its charms upon every face; and yet by this profusion Heaven would seem to show how little it regards such a blessing, since the gift is lavished upon a nation of prostitutes.

“I perceive you desire to know my story, and your curiosity is not so great as my impatience to

gratify it. I find a pleasure in telling past misfortunes to any, but when my deliverer is pleased with the relation, my pleasure is prompted by duty.

"I was born in a country far to the west, where the men are braver and the women more fair than those of Circassia; where the valour of the hero is guided by wisdom, and where delicacy of sentiment points the shafts of female beauty.¹ I was the only daughter of an officer in the army, the child of his age, and, as he used fondly to express it, the only chain that bound him to the world, or made his life pleasing. His station procured him an acquaintance with men of greater rank and fortune than himself, and his regard for me induced him to bring me into every family where he was acquainted. Thus I was early taught all the elegancies and fashionable foibles of such as the world calls polite, and, though without fortune myself, was taught to despise those who lived as if they were poor.

"My intercourse with the great, and my affectation of grandeur, procured me many lovers; but want of fortune deterred them all from any other

¹ This story bears a striking similitude to the real history of Miss S——d, who accompanied Lady W——e in her retreat near Florence, and which the editor had from her own mouth.—GOLDSMITH. This eccentric lady was the daughter of Samuel Rolle, Esq., of Haynton, Devon. She married, in 1724, Robert, afterward second Earl of Orford; and again, in 1751, Mr. Sewallis Shirley, son of Lord Ferrers, from whom she was parted, as she had been from her first husband. In 1742, Count Richecourt, the chief minister at Florence, was her lover. She died at Pisa in 1781; "leaving," says Lord Orford, "everything in her power to her friend cavalier Mozzif at Florence."—See WALPOLE'S *Correspondence*, vol. iv., p. 241.

views than those of passing the present moment agreeably, or of meditating my future ruin. In every company I found myself addressed in a warmer strain of passion than other ladies who were superior in point of rank and beauty; and this I imputed to an excess of respect, which in reality proceeded from very different motives.

“Among the number of such as paid me their addresses was a gentleman, a friend of my father, rather in the decline of life, with nothing remarkable either in his person or address to recommend him. His age, which was about forty, his fortune, which was moderate and barely sufficient to support him, served to throw me off my guard, so that I considered him as the only sincere admirer I had.

“Designing lovers in the decline of life are ever most dangerous. Skilled in all the weaknesses of the sex, they seize each favourable opportunity; and by having less passion than youthful admirers, have less real respect, and therefore less timidity. This insidious wretch used a thousand arts to succeed in his base designs, all which I saw, but imputed to different views, because I thought it absurd to believe the real motives.

“As he continued to frequent my father’s, the friendship between them became every day greater, and at last, from the intimacy with which he was received, I was taught to look upon him as a guardian and a friend. Though I never loved, yet I esteemed him; and this was enough to make me wish for an union, for which he seemed desirous,

but to which he feigned several delays; while in the mean time, from a false report of our being married, every other admirer forsook me.

“I was at last, however, awakened from the delusion, by an account of his being married to another young lady with a considerable fortune. This was no great mortification to me, as I had always regarded him merely from prudential motives; but it had a very different effect upon my father, who, rash and passionate by nature, and besides stimulated by a mistaken notion of military honour, upbraided his friend in such terms that a challenge was soon given and accepted.

“It was about midnight when I was awakened by a message from my father, who desired to see me that moment. I rose with some surprise, and following the messenger, attended only by another servant, came to a field not far from the house, where I found him, the assertor of my honour, my only friend and supporter, the tutor and companion of my youth, lying on one side covered over with blood, and just expiring. No tears streamed down my cheeks, nor sigh escaped from my breast at an object of such terror. I sat down and, supporting his aged head in my lap, gazed upon the ghastly visage with an agony more poignant even than despairing madness. The servants were gone for more assistance. In this gloomy stillness of the night no sounds were heard but his agonising respiration; no object was presented but his wounds, which still continued to stream. With

silent anguish I hung over his dear face, and with my hands strove to stop the blood as it flowed from his wounds. He seemed at first insensible, but at last, turning his dying eyes upon me, 'My dear, dear child,' cried he, 'dear though you have forgotten your own honour and stained mine, I will yet forgive you. By abandoning virtue, you have undone me and yourself, yet take my forgiveness with the same compassion I wish Heaven may pity me.' He expired. All my succeeding happiness fled with him. Reflecting that I was the cause of his death, whom only I loved upon earth; accused of betraying the honour of his family with his latest breath; conscious of my own innocence, yet without even a possibility of vindicating it; without fortune or friends to relieve or pity me; abandoned to infamy and the wide censuring world—I called out upon the dead body that lay stretched before me, and in the agony of my heart asked why he could have left me thus! 'Why, my dear, my only papa, why could you ruin me thus and yourself, for ever! O pity and return, since there is none but you to comfort me!'

"I soon found that I had real cause for sorrow, that I was to expect no compassion from my own sex, nor assistance from the other; and that reputation was much more useful in our commerce with mankind than really to deserve it. Wherever I came, I perceived myself received either with contempt or detestation; or whenever I was civilly

treated, it was from the most base and ungenerous motives.

“Thus driven from the society of the virtuous, I was at last, in order to dispel the anxieties of insupportable solitude, obliged to take up with the company of those whose characters were blasted like my own; but who perhaps deserved their infamy. Among this number was a lady of the first distinction, whose character the public thought proper to brand even with greater infamy than mine. A similitude of distress soon united us; I knew that general reproach had made her miserable; and I had learned to regard misery as an excuse for guilt. Though this lady had not virtue enough to avoid reproach, yet she had too much delicate sensibility not to feel it. She therefore proposed our leaving the country where we were born, and going to live in Italy, where our characters and misfortunes would be unknown. With this I eagerly complied, and we soon found ourselves in one of the most charming retreats in the most beautiful province of that enchanting country.

“Had my companion chosen this as a retreat for injured virtue, an harbour where we might look with tranquillity on the distant angry world, I should have been happy; but very different was her design; she had pitched upon this situation only to enjoy those pleasures in private which she had not sufficient effrontery to satisfy in a more open manner. A nearer acquaintance soon showed me

the vicious part of her character; her mind, as well as her body, seemed formed only for pleasure; she was sentimental only as it served to protract the immediate enjoyment. Formed for society alone she spoke infinitely better than she wrote, and wrote infinitely better than she lived. A person devoted to pleasure often leads the most miserable life imaginable; such was her case: she considered the natural moments of languor as insupportable, passed all her hours between rapture and anxiety, ever in an extreme of agony or of bliss. She felt a pain as sincere for want of appetite as the starving wretch who wants a meal. In those intervals she usually kept her bed, and rose only when in expectation of some new enjoyment. The luxuriant air of the country, the romantic situation of her palace, and the genius of a people whose only happiness lies in sensual refinement, all contributed to banish the remembrance of her native country.

“But though such a life gave her pleasure it had a very different effect upon me; I grew every day more pensive, and my melancholy was regarded as an insult upon her good-humour. I now perceived myself entirely unfit for all society; discarded from the good, and detesting the infamous, I seemed in a state of war with every rank of people; that virtue which should have been my protection in the world was here my crime: in short, detesting life, I was determined to become a recluse, to leave a world where I found no pleasure that could allure me to stay. Thus determined,

I embarked in order to go by sea to Rome, where I intended to take the veil. But even in so short a passage my hard fortune still attended me: our ship was taken by a Barbary corsair; the whole crew, and I among the number, being made slaves. It carries too much the air of romance to inform you of my distresses or obstinacy in this miserable state; it is enough to observe that I have been bought by several masters, each of whom, perceiving my reluctance, rather than use violence, sold me to another, till it was my happiness to be at last rescued by you."

Thus ended her relation, which I have abridged; but as soon as we are arrived at Moscow, for which we intend to set out shortly, you shall be informed of all more particularly. In the mean time, the greatest addition to my happiness will be to hear of yours. Adieu.

LETTER LXI¹

PROPER LESSONS TO A YOUTH ENTERING THE
WORLD, WITH FABLES SUITED TO THE OCCASION

From Lien Chi Altangi to Hingpo.

THE news of your freedom lifts the load of former anxiety from my mind. I can now think of my son without regret, applaud his resignation under calamities, and his conduct in extricating himself from them.

You are now free, just let loose from the bondage of an hard master. This is the crisis of your fate, and as you now manage fortune, succeeding life will be marked with happiness or misery. A few years' perseverance in prudence, which at your age is but another name for virtue, will insure comfort, pleasure, tranquillity, esteem; too eager an enjoyment of every good that now offers will reverse the medal, and present you with poverty, anxiety, remorse, contempt.

² As it has been observed that none are better

¹ Partly reprinted in Essays, 1765, as Essay XII.

² With this sentence Essay XII. afterwards commenced.

qualified to give others advice than those who have taken the least of it themselves, so in this respect I find myself perfectly authorised to offer mine, even though I should waive my paternal authority upon this occasion.¹

The most usual way among young men who have no resolution of their own is first to ask one friend's advice and follow it for some time; then to ask advice of another, and turn to that; so of a third, still unsteady, always changing. However, be assured that every change of this nature is for the worse: people may tell you of your being unfit for some peculiar occupations in life, but heed them not; whatever employment you follow with perseverance and assiduity will be found fit for you; it will be your support in youth, and comfort in age. In learning the useful part in every profession, very moderate abilities will suffice; even if the mind be a little balanced with stupidity, it may in this case be useful. Great abilities have always been less serviceable to the possessors than moderate ones.² Life has been compared to a race, but the allusion still improves by observing that the most swift are ever the least manageable.³

¹ The words "even though I should waive my paternal authority upon this occasion" were altered in 1765 to "and must take leave to throw together a few observations upon that part of a young man's conduct on his entering into life, as it is called"—and thus they stand in the second edition of the *Essays*, 1766.

² "Great abilities are generally obnoxious to the possessors."—*Essays*, 1765 and 1766.

³ "Most apt to stray from the course."—*Essays*, 1765 and 1766.

To know one profession only, is enough for one man to know; and this (whatever the professors may tell you to the contrary) is soon learned. Be contented, therefore, with one good employment; for if you understand two at a time, people will give you business in neither.

A conjurer and a tailor once happened to converse together. "Alas," cries the tailor, "what an unhappy poor creature am I; if people should ever take it in their heads to live without clothes I am undone; I have no other trade to have recourse to." "Indeed, friend, I pity you sincerely," replies the conjurer; "but, thank Heaven, things are not quite so bad with me; for if one trick should fail, I have a hundred tricks more for them yet. However, if at any time you are reduced to beggary, apply to me and I will relieve you." A famine overspread the land; the tailor made a shift to live, because his customers could not be without clothes; but the poor conjurer, with all his hundred tricks, could find none that had money to throw away: it was in vain that he promised to eat fire, or to vomit pins; no single creature would relieve him, till he was at last obliged to beg from the very tailor whose calling he had formerly despised.

There are no obstructions more fatal to fortune than pride and resentment. If you must resent injuries at all, at least suppress your indignation until you become rich, and then show away: the resentment of a poor man is like the efforts of a harmless insect to sting; it may get him crushed,

but cannot defend him. Who values that anger which is consumed only in empty menaces?

Once upon a time a goose fed its young by a pond side; and a goose in such circumstances is always extremely proud and excessive punctilious. If any other animal, without the least design to offend, happened to pass that way, the goose was immediately at him. The pond, she said, was hers, and she would maintain a right in it, and support her honour, while she had a bill to hiss, or a wing to flutter. In this manner she drove away ducks, pigs, and chickens; nay, even the insidious cat was seen to scamper. A lounging mastiff, however, happened to pass by, and thought it no harm if he should lap a little of the water, as he was thirsty. The guardian goose flew at him like a fury, pecked at him with her beak, and sapped him with her feathers. The dog grew angry, had twenty times a good mind to give her a sly snap: but suppressing his indignation, because his master was nigh, "A pox take thee," cries he, "for a fool! sure those who have neither strength nor weapons to fight at least should be civil; [that fluttering and hissing of thine may one day get thine head snapped off, but it can neither injure thy enemies, or ever protect thee.]"¹ So saying, he went forward to the pond, quenched his thirst, in spite of the goose, and followed his master.

Another obstruction to the fortune of youth is

¹ The passage in brackets [] is not in the *Essays*, 1765 and 1766.

that, while they are willing to take offence from none, they are also equally desirous of giving nobody offence. From hence they endeavour to please all, comply with every request, attempt to suit themselves to every company, have no will of their own, but like wax catch every contiguous impression. By thus attempting to give universal satisfaction they at last find themselves miserably disappointed: to bring the generality of admirers on our side, it is sufficient to attempt pleasing a very few.

A painter of eminence was once resolved to finish a piece which should please the whole world. When, therefore, he had drawn a picture, in which his utmost skill was exhausted, it was exposed in the public market-place, with directions at the bottom for every spectator to mark with a brush, which lay by, every limb and feature which seemed erroneous. The spectators came, and in general applauded; but each, willing to show his talent at criticism, marked whatever he thought proper. At evening, when the painter came, he was mortified to find the whole picture one universal blot, not a single stroke that was not stigmatised with marks of disapprobation. Not satisfied with this trial, the next day he was resolved to try them in a different manner, and, exposing his picture as before, desired that every spectator would mark those beauties he approved or admired. The people complied; and the artist, returning, found his picture replete with the marks of beauty; every stroke

that had been yesterday condemned now received the character of approbation. "Well," cries the painter, "I now find that the best way to please one half of the world is not to mind what the other half says; since what are faults in the eyes of these, shall be by those regarded as beauties."¹ Adieu.

¹ "Well," cries the painter, "I now find that the best way to please all the world is to attempt pleasing one half of it."—*Essays*, 1765 and 1766.

LETTER LXII

HISTORY OF CATHARINA ALEXOWNA, WIFE OF PETER
THE GREAT

From the Same

A CHARACTER such as you have represented that of your fair companion, which continues virtuous though loaded with infamy, is truly great. Many regard virtue because it is attended with applause; your favourite only for the internal pleasure it confers. I have often wished that ladies like her were proposed as models for female imitation, and not such as have acquired fame by qualities repugnant to the natural softness of the sex.

Women famed for their valour, their skill in politics, or their learning, leave the duties of their own sex, in order to invade the privileges of ours. I can no more pardon a fair one for endeavouring to wield the club of Hercules than I could him for attempting to twirl her distaff.

The modest virgin, the prudent wife, or the careful matron are much more serviceable in life than

petticoated philosophers, blustering heroines, or virago queens. She who makes her husband and her children happy, who reclaims the one from vice and trains up the other to virtue, is a much greater character than ladies described in romance, whose whole occupation is to murder mankind with shafts from their quiver or their eyes.

Women, it has been observed, are not naturally formed for great cares themselves, but to soften ours. Their tenderness is the proper reward for the dangers we undergo for their preservation; and the ease and cheerfulness of their conversation our desirable retreat from the fatigues of intense application. They are confined within the narrow limits of domestic assiduity; and when they stray beyond them, they move beyond their sphere, and consequently without grace.¹

Fame, therefore, has been very unjustly dispensed among the female sex. Those who least deserved to be remembered meet our admiration and applause; while many, who have been an honour to humanity, are passed over in silence. Perhaps no age has produced a stronger instance of misplaced fame than the present: the Semiramis and the Thalestris of antiquity are talked of, while a modern character, infinitely greater than either, is unnoticed and unknown.

Catharina Alexowna,² born near Derpat, a little

¹ Compare Unacknowledged Essay xiii., in Vol. VII.

² This account seems taken from the manuscript memoirs of H. Spilman, Esq.—GOLDSMITH.

city in Livonia, was heir to no other inheritance than the virtues and frugality of her parents. Her father being dead, she lived with her aged mother in their cottage covered with straw; and both, though very poor, were very contented. Here, retired from the gaze of the world, by the labour of her hands she supported her parent, who was now incapable of supporting herself. While Catharina spun, the old woman would sit by and read some book of devotion; thus, when the fatigues of the day were over, both would sit down contentedly by their fireside, and enjoy the frugal meal with vacant festivity.

Though her face and person were models of perfection, yet her whole attention seemed bestowed upon her mind; her mother taught her to read, and an old Lutheran minister instructed her in the maxims and duties of religion. Nature had furnished her not only with a ready but with a solid turn of thought; not only with a strong but a right understanding. Such truly female accomplishments procured her several solicitations of marriage from the peasants of the country; but their offers were refused, for she loved her mother too tenderly to think of a separation.

Catharina was fifteen when her mother died; she now therefore left her cottage, and went to live with the Lutheran minister by whom she had been instructed from her childhood. In his house she resided in quality of governess to his children; at

once reconciling in her character unerring prudence with surprising vivacity.

The old man, who regarded her as one of his own children, had her instructed in dancing and music by the masters who attended the rest of his family; thus she continued to improve till he died, by which accident she was once more reduced to pristine poverty. The country of Livonia was at this time wasted by war, and lay in a most miserable state of desolation. Those calamities are ever most heavy upon the poor; wherefore Catharina, though possessed of so many accomplishments, experienced all the miseries of hopeless indigence. Provisions becoming every day more scarce, and her private stock being entirely exhausted, she resolved at last to travel to Marienburgh, a city of greater plenty.

With her scanty wardrobe packed up in a wallet, she set out on her journey on foot: she was to walk through a region miserable by nature, but rendered still more hideous by the Swedes and Russians, who, as each happened to become masters, plundered it at discretion; but hunger had taught her to despise the dangers and fatigues of the way.

One evening upon her journey, as she had entered a cottage by the wayside, to take up her lodging for the night, she was insulted by two Swedish soldiers, who insisted upon qualifying her, as they termed it, to follow the camp. They might probably have carried their insults into violence, had not a subaltern officer, accidentally passing



- F.S. COBURN - 97

by, come in to her assistance: upon his appearing, the soldiers immediately desisted; but her thankfulness was hardly greater than her surprise when she instantly recollected in her deliverer the son of the Lutheran minister, her former instructor, benefactor, and friend.

This was an happy interview for Catharina: the little stock of money she had brought from home was by this time quite exhausted; her clothes were gone, piece by piece, in order to satisfy those who had entertained her in their houses: her generous countryman, therefore, parted with what he could spare, to buy her clothes, furnished her with an horse, and gave her letters of recommendation to Mr. Gluck, a faithful friend of his father's and superintendent of Marienburgh.

Our beautiful stranger had only to appear, to be well received; she was immediately admitted into the superintendent's family, as governess to his two daughters; and, though yet but seventeen, showed herself capable of instructing her sex, not only in virtue but politeness. Such was her good sense and beauty that her master himself in a short time offered her his hand, which, to his great surprise, she thought proper to refuse. Actuated by a principle of gratitude, she was resolved to marry her deliverer only, even though he had lost an arm, and was otherwise disfigured by wounds in the service.

In order, therefore, to prevent further solicitations from others, as soon as the officer came to

town upon duty, she offered him her person, which he accepted with transport, and their nuptials were solemnised as usual. But all the lines of her fortune were to be striking: the very day on which they were married, the Russians laid siege to Marienburgh. The unhappy soldier had now no time to enjoy the well-earned pleasures of matrimony; he was called off before consummation to an attack, from which he was never after seen to return.

In the meantime the siege went on with fury, aggravated on one side by obstinacy, on the other by revenge. This war between the two northern powers at that time was truly barbarous; the innocent peasant and the harmless virgin often shared the fate of the soldier in arms. Marienburgh was taken by assault; and such was the fury of the assailants that not only the garrison, but almost all the inhabitants, men, women, and children, were put to the sword; at length, when the carnage was pretty well over, Catharina was found hidden in an oven.

She had been hitherto poor, but still was free; she was now to conform to her hard fate, and learn what it was to be a slave. In this situation, however, she behaved with piety and humility; and though misfortunes had abated her vivacity, yet she was cheerful. The fame of her merit and resignation reached even Prince Menzikoff, the Russian general: he desired to see her, was struck with her beauty, bought her from the soldier her master,

and placed her under the direction of his own sister. Here she was treated with all the respect which her merit deserved, while her beauty every day improved with her good fortune.

She had not been long in this situation when, Peter the Great paying the prince a visit, Catharina happened to come in with some dry fruits, which she served round with peculiar modesty. The mighty monarch saw and was struck with her beauty. He returned the next day, called for the beautiful slave, asked her several questions, and found her understanding even more perfect than her person.

He had been forced when young to marry from motives of interest; he was now resolved to marry pursuant to his own inclinations. He immediately inquired the history of the fair Livonian, who was not yet eighteen. He traced her through the vale of obscurity, through all the vicissitudes of her fortune, and found her truly great in them all. The meanness of her birth was no obstruction to his design; their nuptials were solemnised in private, the prince assuring his courtiers that virtue alone was the properest ladder to a throne.

We now see Catharina, from the low mud-walled cottage, empress of the greatest kingdom upon earth. The poor solitary wanderer is now surrounded by thousands, who find happiness in her smile. She, who formerly wanted a meal, is now capable of diffusing plenty upon whole nations.

To her fortune she owed a part of this pre-eminence, but to her virtues more.¹

She ever after retained those great qualities which first placed her on a throne; and while the extraordinary prince, her husband, laboured for the reformation of his male subjects, she studied in her turn the improvement of her own sex. She altered their dresses, introduced mixed assemblies, instituted an order of female knighthood; and at length, when she had greatly filled all the stations of empress, friend, wife, and mother, bravely died without regret, regretted by all. Adieu.

¹ "There have been," says Voltaire, "instances, before this, of private persons being raised to the throne; but that a poor stranger, who had been discovered amidst the ruins of a plundered town, should become the absolute sovereign of that very empire into which she was led a captive, is an incident which fortune and merit have never before produced in the annals of the world."

LETTER LXIII

THE RISE AND THE DECLINE OF LITERATURE NOT
DEPENDENT ON MAN, BUT RESULTING FROM
THE VICISSITUDES OF NATURE

*From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, First President of the Cere-
monial Academy at Pekin in China*

I N every letter I expect accounts of some new revolutions in China, some strange occurrence in the state, or disaster among my private acquaintance. I open every packet with tremulous expectation, and am agreeably disappointed when I find my friends and my country continuing in felicity. I wander, but they are at rest; they suffer few changes but what pass in my own restless imagination; it is only the rapidity of my own motion that gives an imaginary swiftness to objects which are in some measure immovable.¹

Yet believe me, my friend, that even China itself

¹ "Before my brother Charles came hither, my thoughts sometimes found refuge from severe studies among my friends in Ireland. I fancied strange revolutions at home; but I find it was the rapidity of my own motion that gave an imaginary one to objects really at rest."—GOLDSMITH to D. Hodson, Esq., Dec. 27, 1757.

is imperceptibly degenerating from her ancient greatness: her laws are now more venal, and her merchants are more deceitful than formerly; the very arts and sciences have run to decay. Observe the carvings on our ancient bridges; figures that add grace even to nature. There is not an artist now in all the empire that can imitate their beauty. Our manufactures in porcelain, too, are inferior to what we once were famous for; and even Europe now begins to excel us. There was a time when China was the receptacle of strangers; when all were welcome who either came to improve the state, or admire its greatness: now, the empire is shut up from every foreign improvement, and the very inhabitants discourage each other from prosecuting their own internal advantages.

Whence this degeneracy in a state so little subject to external revolutions? how happens it that China, which is now more powerful than ever, which is less subject to foreign invasions, and even assisted in some discoveries by her connections with Europe—whence comes it, I say, that the empire is thus declining so fast into barbarity?

This decay is surely from nature, and not the result of voluntary degeneracy. In a period of two or three thousand years she seems at proper intervals to produce great minds, with an effort resembling that which introduces the vicissitudes of seasons. They rise up at once, continue for an age, enlighten the world, fall like ripened corn, and mankind again gradually relapse into pristine

barbarity. We little ones look around, are amazed at the decline, seek after the causes of this invisible decay, attribute to want of encouragement what really proceeds from want of power, are astonished to find every art and every science in the decline, not considering that autumn is over, and fatigued nature again begins to repose for some succeeding effort.

Some periods have been remarkable for the production of men of extraordinary stature, others for producing some particular animals in great abundance; some for excessive plenty, and others again for seemingly causeless famine. Nature, which shows herself so very different in her visible productions, must surely differ also from herself in the production of minds, and while she astonishes one age with the strength and stature of a Milo or a Maximin, may bless another with the wisdom of a Plato, or the goodness of an Antonine.

Let us not, then, attribute to accident the falling off of every nation, but to the natural revolution of things. Often in the darkest ages there has appeared some one man of surprising abilities, who, with all his understanding, failed to bring his barbarous age into refinement: all mankind seemed to sleep, till nature gave the general call, and then the whole world seemed at once roused at the voice; science triumphed in every country, and the brightness of a single genius seemed lost in a galaxy of contiguous glory.

Thus, the enlightened periods in every age have

been universal. At the time when China first began to emerge from barbarity the Western world was equally rising into refinement; when we had our Yaou,¹ they had their Sesostriis. In succeeding ages Confucius² and Pythagoras seem born nearly together, and a train of philosophers then sprung up as well in Greece as in China. The period of renewed barbarity began to have an universal spread much about the same time, and continued for several centuries, till in the year of the Christian era 1400 the Emperor Yong-lo³ arose to revive the learning of the East; while, about the same time the Medicean family laboured in Italy to raise infant genius from the cradle.⁴ Thus, we

¹ Yaou, the pattern of all Chinese emperors, is said to have commenced his reign 2357 years before Christ. According to the *Shoo-king* (one of the five canonical works), he commissioned Hi and Ho, and other eminent astronomers, to observe the revolutions of the heavens, and to proclaim the periods of the different seasons. By the assistance of these learned men, he fixed the length of the year at 365½ days, and at 366 in every fourth year.—See DAVIS's *Chinese*, vol. i., p. 171.

² "The family of Confucius is, in my opinion, the most illustrious in the world. After a painful ascent of eight or ten centuries, our barons and princes of Europe are lost in the darkness of the Middle Ages; but, in the vast equality of the empire of China, the posterity of Confucius have maintained, above two thousand two hundred years, this peaceful honour and perpetual succession. The chief of the family is still revered, by the sovereign and the people, as the lively image of the wisest of mankind."—GIBBON, *Miscellaneous Works*, vol. i., p. 3.

³ Yong-lo ascended to the throne A.D. 1400. On his accession, the capital was transferred to Pekin; and in his reign Timour, or Tamerlane, died on his way to the conquest of China.

⁴ "But see! each Muse, in LEO's golden days,

Starts from her trance, and trims her wither'd bays,

see politeness spreading over every part of the world in one age and barbarity succeeding in another; at one period a blaze of light diffusing itself over the whole world, and at another, all mankind wrapped up in the profoundest ignorance.

Such has been the situation of things in times past; and such probably it will ever be. China, I have observed, has evidently begun to degenerate from its former politeness; and were the learning of the Europeans at present candidly considered, the decline would perhaps appear to have already taken place. We should find among the natives of the West the study of morality displaced for mathematical disquisition, or metaphysical subtleties; we should find learning begin to separate from the useful duties and concerns of life, while none ventured to aspire after that character but they who know much more than is truly amusing or useful. We should find every great attempt suppressed by prudence, and the rapturous sublimity in writing cooled by a cautious fear of offence. We should find few of those daring spirits who bravely venture to be wrong, and who are willing to hazard much for the sake of great acquisitions. Providence has indulged the world with a period

Rome's ancient Genius, o'er its ruins spread,
Shakes off the dust, and rears his rev'rend head.
Then Sculpture and her sister-arts revive;
Stones leaped to form, and rocks began to live:
With sweeter notes each rising temple rung;
A Raphael painted, and a Vida sung."

POPE.

of almost four hundred years' refinement: does it not now by degrees sink us into our former ignorance, leaving us only the love of wisdom, while it deprives us of its advantages? Adieu.

LETTER LXIV

THE GREAT EXCHANGE HAPPINESS FOR SHOW—
THEIR FOLLY IN THIS RESPECT OF USE TO
SOCIETY

From the Same

THE princes of Europe have found out a manner of rewarding their subjects who have behaved well, by presenting them with about two yards of blue ribbon, which is worn about the shoulder. They who are honoured with this mark of distinction are called knights, and the king himself is always the head of the order. This is a very frugal method of recompensing the most important services; and it is very fortunate for kings that their subjects are satisfied with such trifling rewards. Should a nobleman happen to lose his leg in a battle, the king presents him with two yards of ribbon, and he is paid for the loss of his limb. Should an ambassador spend all his paternal fortune in supporting the honour of his country abroad, the king presents him with two yards of ribbon, which is to be considered as an equivalent to his estate. In short, while an European king has a yard of blue or green ribbon left,

he need be under no apprehension of wanting statesmen, generals, and soldiers.

I cannot sufficiently admire those kingdoms in which men with large patrimonial estates are willing thus to undergo real hardships for empty favours. A person, already possessed of a competent fortune, who undertakes to enter the career of ambition, feels many real inconveniences from his station, while it procures him no real happiness that he was not possessed of before. He could eat, drink, and sleep, before he became a courtier, as well, perhaps better, than when invested with his authority. He could command flatterers in a private station as well as in his public capacity, and indulge at home every favourite inclination, uncensured and unseen by the people.

What real good, then, does an addition to a fortune already sufficient procure? Not any. Could the great man, by having his fortune increased, increase also his appetites, then precedence might be attended with real amusement.

Was he, by having his one thousand made two, thus enabled to enjoy two wives, or eat two dinners, then, indeed, he might be excused for undergoing some pain in order to extend the sphere of his enjoyments. But, on the contrary, he finds his desire for pleasure often lessen, as he takes pains to be able to improve it; and his capacity of enjoyment diminishes as his fortune happens to increase.

Instead, therefore, of regarding the great with envy, I generally consider them with some share

of compassion. I look upon them as a set of good-natured misguided people, who are indebted to us, and not to themselves, for all the happiness they enjoy. For our pleasure, and not their own, they sweat under a cumbrous heap of finery; for our pleasure the lackeyed train, the slow parading pageant, with all the gravity of grandeur, moves in review: a single coat, or a single footman, answers all the purposes of the most indolent refinement as well; and those who have twenty may be said to keep one for their own pleasure, and the other nineteen merely for ours. So true is the observation of Confucius, that "we take greater pains to persuade others that we are happy than in endeavouring to think so ourselves."

But though this desire of being seen, of being made the subject of discourse, and of supporting the dignities of an exalted station, be troublesome enough to the ambitious, yet it is well for society that there are men thus willing to exchange ease and safety for danger and a ribbon. We lose nothing by their vanity, and it would be unkind to endeavour to deprive a child of its rattle. If a duke or a duchess are willing to carry a long train for our entertainment, so much the worse for themselves; if they choose to exhibit in public, with a hundred lackeys and mamelukes in their equipage, for our entertainment, still so much the worse for themselves: it is the spectators alone who give and receive the pleasure; they only are the sweating figures that swell the pageant.

A mandarin, who took much pride in appearing with a number of jewels on every part of his robe, was once accosted by an old sly bonze, who, following him through several streets, and bowing often to the ground, thanked him for his jewels. "What does the man mean?" cried the mandarin. "Friend, I never gave thee any of my jewels." "No," replied the other; "but you have let me look at them, and that is all the use you can make of them yourself; so there is no difference between us, except that you have the trouble of watching them, and that is an employment I don't much desire." Adieu.

LETTER LXV

THE HISTORY OF A PHILOSOPHIC COBBLER

From the Same

THOUGH not very fond of seeing a pageant myself, yet I am generally pleased with being in the crowd which sees it: it is amusing to observe the effect which such a spectacle has upon the variety of faces, the pleasure it excites in some, the envy in others, and the wishes it raises in all. With this design, I lately went to see the entry of a foreign ambassador, resolved to make one in the mob, to shout as they shouted, to fix with earnestness upon the same frivolous objects, and participate for awhile the pleasures and the wishes of the vulgar.

Struggling here for some time, in order to be first to see the cavalcade as it passed, some one of the crowd unluckily happened to tread upon my shoe, and tore it in such a manner that I was utterly unqualified to march forward with the main body, and obliged to fall back in the rear. Thus rendered incapable of being a spectator of the show myself,

I was at least willing to observe the spectators, and limped behind like one of the invalids which follow the march of an army.

In this plight as I was considering the eagerness that appeared on every face, how some hustled to get foremost, and others contented themselves with taking a transient peep when they could, how some praised the four black servants that were stuck behind one of the equipages, and some the ribbons that decorated the horses' necks in another, my attention was called off to an object more extraordinary than any that I had yet seen: a poor cobbler sat in his stall by the wayside, and continued to work while the crowd passed by, without testifying the smallest share of curiosity. I own his want of attention excited mine; and as I stood in need of his assistance, I thought it best to employ a philosophic cobbler on this occasion. Perceiving my business, therefore, he desired me to enter and sit down, took my shoe in his lap, and began to mend it with his usual indifference and taciturnity.

"How, my friend," said I to him, "can you continue to work, while all those things are passing by your door?" "Very fine they are, master," returned the cobbler, "for those that like them, to be sure; but what are all those fine things to me? You don't know what it is to be a cobbler, and so much the better for yourself. Your bread is baked; you may go and see sights the whole day, and eat a warm supper when you come home at night; but



for me, if I should run hunting after all these fine folk, what should I get by my journey but an appetite, and, God help me! I have too much of that at home already, without stirring out of it. Your people who may eat four meals a day, and a supper at night, are but a bad example to such a one as I. No, master, as God has called me into this world in order to mend old shoes, I have no business with fine folk, and they no business with me." I here interrupted him with a smile. "See this last, master," continues he, "and this hammer; this last and hammer are the two best friends I have in this world; nobody else will be my friend, because I want a friend. The great folks you saw pass by just now have five hundred friends, because they have no occasion for them. Now, while I stick to my good friends here, I am very contented; but when I ever so little run after sights and fine things, I begin to hate my work, I grow sad, and have no heart to mend shoes any longer."

This discourse only served to raise my curiosity to know more of a man whom nature had thus formed into a philosopher. I therefore insensibly led him into a history of his adventures. "I have lived," said he, "a wandering sort of life now five and fifty years; here to-day, and gone to-morrow; for it was my misfortune, when I was young, to be fond of changing." "You have been a traveller, then, I presume?" interrupted I. "I cannot boast much of travelling," continued he, "for I have never left the parish in which I was born but three

times in my life, that I can remember; but then there is not a street in the whole neighbourhood that I have not lived in, at some time or another. When I began to settle, and to take to my business in one street, some unforeseen misfortune, or a desire of trying my luck elsewhere, has removed me perhaps a whole mile away from my former customers, while some more lucky cobbler would come into my place, and make a handsome fortune among friends of my making: there was one who actually died in a stall that I had left, worth seven pounds seven shillings, all in hard gold, which he had quilted into the waistband of his breeches."

I could not but smile at these migrations of a man by the fireside, and continued to ask if he had ever been married. "Aye, that I have, master," replied he, "for sixteen long years; and a weary life I had of it, Heaven knows. My wife took it into her head that the only way to thrive in this world was to save money; so, though our comings-in was but about three shillings a week, all that ever she could lay her hands upon she used to hide away from me, though we were obliged to starve the whole week after for it.

"The first three years we used to quarrel about this every day, and I always got the better; but she had a hard spirit, and still continued to hide as usual, so that I was at last tired of quarrelling and getting the better, and she scraped and scraped at pleasure, till I was almost starved to death. Her conduct drove me at last in despair to the alehouse:

here I used to sit with people who hated home like myself, drank while I had money left, and run in score when anybody would trust me; till at last the landlady, coming one day with a long bill when I was from home, and putting it into my wife's hands, the length of it effectually broke her heart. I searched the whole stall after she was dead for money, but she had hidden it so effectually that with all my pains I could never find a farthing."

By this time my shoe was mended, and satisfying the poor artist for his trouble, and rewarding him besides for his information, I took my leave, and returned home to lengthen out the amusement his conversation afforded, by communicating it to my friend. Adieu.

LETTER LXVI

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LOVE AND GRATITUDE
—MENCIUS AND THE HERMIT—STORY OF THE
FIDDLE-CASE

From Lien Chi Altangi to Hingpo, by the way of Moscow

GENEROSITY, properly applied, will supply every other external advantage in life, but the love of those we converse with: it will procure esteem, and a conduct resembling real affection; but actual love is the spontaneous production of the mind; no generosity can purchase, no rewards increase, nor no liberality continue it: the very person who is obliged has it not in his power to force his lingering affections upon the object he should love, and voluntarily mix passion with gratitude.

Imparted fortune and well-placed liberality may procure the benefactor good-will, may load the person obliged with the sense of the duty he lies under to retaliate; this is gratitude, and simple gratitude, untinctured with love, is all the return an ingenuous mind can bestow for former benefits.

But gratitude and love are almost opposite affections; love is often an involuntary passion, placed

upon our companions without our consent, and frequently conferred without our previous esteem. We love some men, we know not why; our tenderness is naturally excited in all their concerns; we excuse their faults with the same indulgence, and approve their virtues with the same applause with which we consider our own. While we entertain the passion, it pleases us; we cherish it with delight, and give it up with reluctance; and love for love is all the reward we expect or desire.

Gratitude, on the contrary, is never conferred but where there have been previous endeavours to excite it; we consider it as a debt, and our spirits wear a load till we have discharged the obligation. Every acknowledgment of gratitude is a circumstance of humiliation; and some are found to submit to frequent mortifications of this kind, proclaiming what obligations they owe, merely because they think it in some measure cancels the debt.

Thus love is the most easy and agreeable, and gratitude the most humiliating affection of the mind: we never reflect on the man we *love*, without exulting in our choice, while he who has bound us to him by *benefits* alone rises to our idea as a person to whom we have in some measure forfeited our freedom. Love and gratitude are seldom, therefore, found in the same breast without impairing each other; we may tender the one or the other singly to those we converse with, but cannot command both together. By attempting to

increase, we diminish them; the mind becomes bankrupt under too large obligations; all additional benefits lessen every hope of future return, and shut up every avenue that leads to tenderness.

In all our connections with society, therefore, it is not only generous but prudent to appear insensible of the value of those favours we bestow, and endeavour to make the obligation seem as light as possible. Love must be taken by stratagem, and not by open force: we should seem ignorant that we oblige, and leave the mind at full liberty to give or refuse its affections; for constraint may indeed leave the receiver still grateful, but it will certainly produce disgust.

If to procure gratitude be our only aim, there is no great art in making the acquisition: a benefit conferred demands a just acknowledgment, and we have a right to insist upon our due.

But it were much more prudent to forego our right on such an occasion, and exchange it, if we can, for love. We receive but little advantage from repeated protestations of gratitude, but they cost him very much from whom we exact them in return: exacting a grateful acknowledgment is demanding a debt by which the creditor is not advantaged, and the debtor pays with reluctance.

As Mencius, the philosopher, was travelling in pursuit of wisdom, night overtook him at the foot of a gloomy mountain, remote from the habitations of men. Here, as he was straying, while rain and thunder conspired to make solitude still

more hideous, he perceived a hermit's cell, and, approaching, asked for shelter. "Enter," cries the hermit, in a severe tone; "men deserve not to be obliged, but it would be imitating their ingratitude to treat them as they deserve. Come in: examples of vice may sometimes strengthen us in the ways of virtue."

After a frugal meal, which consisted of roots and tea, Mencius could not repress his curiosity to know why the hermit had retired from mankind, the actions of whom taught the truest lessons of wisdom. "Mention not the name of man," cries the hermit with indignation; "here let me live retired from a base ungrateful world; here among the beasts of the forest I shall find no flatterers: the lion is a generous enemy, and the dog a faithful friend; but man, base man can poison the bowl, and smile while he presents it." "You have been used ill by mankind?" interrupted the philosopher shrewdly. "Yes," returned the hermit, "on mankind I have exhausted my whole fortune, and this staff and that cup, and those roots, are all that I have in return." "Did you bestow your fortune, or did you only lend it?" returned Mencius. "I bestowed it, undoubtedly," replied the other, "for where were the merit of being a money-lender?" "Did they ever own that they received it?" still adds the philosopher. "A thousand times," cries the hermit; "they every day loaded me with professions of gratitude for obligations received, and solicitations for future favours." "If, then," says

Mencius, smiling, "you did not lend your fortune in order to have it returned, it is unjust to accuse them of ingratitude; they owned themselves obliged, you expected no more, and they certainly earned each favour by frequently acknowledging the obligation." The hermit was struck with the reply, and surveying his guest with emotion, "I have heard of the great Mencius, and you certainly are the man: I am now four score years old, but still a child in wisdom; take me back to the school of man, and educate me as one of the most ignorant and the youngest of your disciples!"

Indeed, my son, it is better to have friends in our passage through life than grateful dependants; and as love is a more willing, so it is a more lasting tribute than extorted obligation. As we are uneasy when greatly obliged, gratitude once refused can never after be recovered: the mind that is base enough to disallow the just return, instead of feeling any uneasiness upon recollection, triumphs in its new-acquired freedom, and in some measure is pleased with conscious baseness.

Very different is the situation of disagreeing friends; their separation produces mutual uneasiness; like that divided being in fabulous creation, their sympathetic souls once more desire their former union; the joys of both are imperfect, their gayest moments tinctured with uneasiness; each seeks for the smallest concessions to clear the way to a wished-for explanation; the most trifling

acknowledgment, the slightest accident, serves to effect a mutual reconciliation.

But, instead of pursuing the thought, permit me to soften the severity of advice by an European story which will fully illustrate my meaning.

A fiddler and his wife, who had rubbed through life as most couples usually do, sometimes good friends, at others not quite so well, one day happened to have a dispute, which was conducted with becoming spirit on both sides. The wife was sure she was right, and the husband was resolved to have his own way. What was to be done in such a case? The quarrel grew worse by explanations, and at last the fury of both rose to such a pitch, that they made a vow never to sleep together in the same bed for the future. This was the most rash vow that could be imagined, for they still were friends at bottom, and besides they had but one bed in the house; however, resolved they were to go through with it, and at night the fiddle-case was laid in bed between them, in order to make a separation. In this manner they continued for three weeks; every night the fiddle-case being placed as a barrier to divide them.

By this time, however, each heartily repented of their vow; their resentment was at an end, and their love began to return; they wished the fiddle-case away, but both had too much spirit to begin. One night, however, as they were both lying awake with the detested fiddle-case between them, the husband happened to sneeze; to which the wife,

as is usual in such cases, bid God bless him:¹ "Aye but," returns the husband, "woman, do you say that from your heart?" "Indeed, I do, my poor Nicholas," cries his wife, "I say it with all my heart." "If so, then," says the husband, "we had as good remove the fiddle-case."

¹ "As much as to say, May God so bless you as that portends; for as sneezing is beneficial to the head, and an effort of nature to remove an obstruction, or to throw off anything that either clogs or stimulates, so it was anciently reckoned a good omen."—XENOPHON, *Cyrop.*, iii., c. 2.—*Anonymiana*, p. 262.

LETTER LXVII

THE FOLLY OF ATTEMPTING TO LEARN WISDOM BY
BEING RECLUSE¹

From the Same

BOOKS, my son, while they teach us to respect the interests of others, often make us unmindful of our own: while they instruct the youthful reader to grasp at social happiness, he grows miserable in detail, and, attentive to universal harmony, often forgets that he himself has a part to sustain in the concert. I dislike therefore the philosopher who describes the inconveniences of life in such pleasing colours that the pupil grows enamoured of distress, longs to try the charms of poverty, meets it without dread, nor fears its inconveniences till he severely feels them.

A youth who has thus spent his life among books, new to the world, and unacquainted with man but by philosophic information, may be considered as

¹ Many of the observations in this paper are to be found in Goldsmith's letters and in other of his writings, and allude, as he indeed admits, to his own outset in life.

a being whose mind is filled with the vulgar errors of the wise; utterly unqualified for a journey through life, yet confident of his own skill in the direction, he sets out with confidence, blunders on with vanity, and finds himself at last undone.

He first has learned from books, and then lays it down as a maxim, that all mankind are virtuous or vicious in excess; and he has been long taught to detest vice and love virtue. Warm, therefore in attachments, and steadfast in enmity, he treats every creature as a friend or foe; expects from those he loves unerring integrity, and consigns his enemies to the reproach of wanting every virtue. On this principle he proceeds; and here begin his disappointments. Upon a closer inspection of human nature, he perceives that he should have moderated his friendship, and softened his severity; for he often finds the excellencies of one part of mankind clouded with vice, and the faults of the other brightened with virtue; he finds no character so sanctified that has not its failings, none so infamous but has somewhat to attract our esteem; he beholds impiety in lawn, and fidelity in fetters.

He now, therefore, but too late, perceives that his regards should have been more cool, and his hatred less violent; that the truly wise seldom court romantic friendships with the good, and avoid, if possible, the resentment even of the wicked. Every moment gives him fresh instances that the bonds of friendship are broken if drawn too closely, and that those whom he has treated

with disrespect more than retaliate the injury. At length, therefore, he is obliged to confess that he has declared war upon the vicious half of mankind without being able to form an alliance among the virtuous to espouse his quarrel.

Our book-taught philosopher, however, is now too far advanced to recede; and, though poverty be the just consequence of the many enemies his conduct has created, yet he is resolved to meet it without shrinking. Philosophers have described poverty in most charming colours, and even his vanity is touched in thinking that he shall show the world in himself one more example of patience, fortitude, and resignation. "Come then, O Poverty! for what is there in thee dreadful to the wise? Temperance, health, and frugality walk in thy train; cheerfulness and liberty are ever thy companions. Shall any be ashamed of thee, of whom Cincinnatus was not ashamed? The running brook, the herbs of the field, can amply satisfy nature; man wants but little, nor that little long.¹ Come then, O Poverty, while kings stand by, and gaze with admiration at the true philosopher's resignation."

The goddess appears, for Poverty ever comes at the call; but, alas! he finds her by no means the charming figure books and his warm imagination had painted. As when an Eastern bride, whom

¹ "Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long."

GOLDSMITH, *Edwin and Angelina*.

her friends and relations had long described as a model of perfection, pays her first visit, the longing bridegroom lifts the veil to see a face he had never seen before, but, instead of a countenance blazing with beauty like the sun, he beholds deformity shooting icicles to his heart—such appears Poverty to her new entertainer; all the fabric of enthusiasm is at once demolished, and a thousand miseries rise upon its ruins, while contempt, with pointing finger, is foremost in the hideous procession.

The poor man now finds that he can get no kings to look at him while he is eating; he finds that in proportion as he grows poor the world turns its back upon him, and gives him leave to act the philosopher in all the majesty of solitude. It might be agreeable enough to play the philosopher while we are conscious that mankind are spectators; but what signifies wearing the mask of sturdy contentment, and mounting the stage of restraint, when not one creature will assist at the exhibition!¹ Thus is he forsaken of men, while his fortitude wants the satisfaction even of self-applause; for either he does not feel his present calamities, and that is natural insensibility; or he disguises his feelings, and that is dissimulation.

Spleen now begins to take up the man: not distinguishing in his resentments, he regards all man-

¹ A similar train of thought will be found in Letter cxix., *On the Distresses of the Poor*: "Where is the magnanimity of bearing misfortunes when the whole world is looking on? Men, in such circumstances, can act bravely, even from motives of vanity."

kind with detestation, and, commencing man-hater, seeks solitude to be at liberty to rail.

It has been said that he who retires to solitude is either a beast or an angel. The censure is too severe, and the praise unmerited; the discontented being who retires from society is generally some good-natured man, who has begun life without experience, and knew not how to gain it in his intercourse with mankind. Adieu.

LETTER LXVIII

QUACKS RIDICULED — SOME PARTICULARLY MENTIONED

From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, First President of the Ceremonial Academy at Peking

I FORMERLY acquainted thee, most grave Fum, with the excellence of the English in the art of healing. The Chinese boast their skill in pulses, the Siamese their botanical knowledge, but the English advertising physicians alone of being the great restorers of health, the dispensers of youth, and the insurers of longevity. I can never enough admire ¹ the sagacity of this country for the encouragement given to the professors of this art: with what indulgence does she foster up those of her own growth, and kindly cherish those that come from abroad! Like a skilful gardener, she invites them from every foreign climate to herself. Here every great exotic strikes root as soon

¹ The passage commencing "I can never enough admire," etc., was printed in part by its author in his *Essays*, 1765, as Essay No. xx.

as imported, and feels the genial beam of favour; while the mighty metropolis, like one vast munificent dunghill, receives them indiscriminately to her breast, and supplies each with more than native nourishment.

In other countries the physician pretends to cure disorders in the lump; the same doctor who combats the gout in the toe shall pretend to prescribe for a pain in the head; and he who at one time cures a consumption shall at another give drugs for a dropsy. How absurd and ridiculous! this is being a mere jack-of-all-trades. Is the animal machine less complicated than a brass pin? Not less than ten different hands are required to make a pin; and shall the body be set right by one single operator?

The English are sensible of the force of this reasoning: they have, therefore, one doctor for the eyes, another for the toes; they have their sciatica doctors, and inoculating doctors; they have one doctor who is modestly content with securing them from bug-bites, and five hundred who prescribe for the bite of mad dogs.

The learned are not here retired, with vicious modesty, from public view; for every dead wall is covered with their names, their abilities, their amazing cures, and places of abode. Few patients escape falling into their hands, unless blasted by lightning or struck dead with some sudden disorder. It may sometimes happen that a stranger who does not understand English, or a countryman who cannot read, dies, without ever hearing of the vivify-

ing drops, or restorative electuary; but, for my part, before I was a week in town I had learned to bid the whole catalogue of disorders defiance, and was perfectly acquainted with the names and the medicines of every great man, or great woman, of them all.

But as nothing pleases curiosity more than anecdotes of the great, however minute or trifling, I must present you, inadequate as my abilities are to the subject, with some account of those personages who lead in this honourable profession.

The first upon this list of glory is Doctor Richard Rock, F.U.N. This great man, short of stature, is fat, and waddles as he walks. He always wears a white three-tailed wig nicely combed and frizzed upon each cheek; sometimes he carries a cane, but an hat never. It is indeed very remarkable that this extraordinary personage should never wear an hat, but so it is, he never wears an hat. He is usually drawn at the top of his own bills, sitting in his arm-chair, holding a little bottle between his finger and thumb, and surrounded with rotten teeth, nippers, pills, packets, and gally-pots. No man can promise fairer nor better than he; for, as he observes, "Be your disorder never so far gone, be under no uneasiness, make yourself quite easy; I can cure you."

The next in fame, though by some reckoned of equal pretensions, is Doctor Timothy Franks, F.O.G.H., living in a place called the Old Bailey. As Rock is remarkably squab, his great rival

Franks is as remarkably tall. He was born in the year of the Christian era 1692, and is, while I now write, exactly sixty-eight years, three months, and four days old. Age, however, has no ways impaired his usual health and vivacity. I am told he generally walks with his breast open. This gentleman, who is of a mixed reputation, is particularly remarkable for a becoming assurance, which carries him gently through life; for, except Doctor Rock, none are more blest with the advantages of face than Doctor Franks.

And yet the great have their foibles as well as the little. I am almost ashamed to mention it: let the foibles of the great rest in peace. Yet I must impart the whole to my friend. These two great men are actually now at variance; yes, my dear Fum Hoam, by the head of our grandfather, they are now at variance like mere men, mere common mortals. The champion Rock advises the world to beware of bog-trotting quacks, while Franks retorts the wit and the sarcasm (for they have both a world of wit) by fixing on his rival the odious appellation of Dumplin Dick.¹ He calls the serious Dr. Rock,

¹ When these letters were written the contentions of Rock and Dick for employment furnished the public with occasional amusement. Franks cautioned the town, by public advertisements, against Rock: "Be not *Rocked* into eternity by that vain and impudent pretender *Dumpling Dick*, who still lives at the gate of the inn where he was once porter." To which Rock rejoined: "If you would avoid destruction, avoid the Old Bailey; for there lives an old soldier, discharged by the *beat of drum*, who has killed his" thousands, but not in battle; his pills are much more fatal than were his *bullets*."

Dumplin Dick! Head of Confucius, what profanation! Dumplin Dick! What a pity, ye powers, that the learned, who were born mutually to assist in enlightening the world, should thus differ among themselves, and make even the profession ridiculous! Sure the world is wide enough, at least, for two great personages to figure in. Men of science should leave controversy to the little world below them; and then we might see Rock and Franks walking together hand-in-hand, smiling, onward to immortality.

Next to these is Doctor Walker, preparator of his own medicines. This gentleman is remarkable for an aversion to quacks, frequently cautioning the public to be careful into what hands they commit their safety; by which he would insinuate that if they do not employ him alone they must be undone. His public spirit is equal to his success. Not for himself, but his country, is the gally-pot prepared, and the drops sealed up with proper directions, for any part of the town or country. All this is for his country's good: so that he is now grown old in the practice of physic and virtue; and, to use his own elegance of expression, "There is not such another medicine as his in the world again."

This, my friend, is a formidable triumvirate; and yet, formidable as they are, I am resolved to defend the honour of Chinese physic against them all. I have made a vow to summon Doctor Rock to a solemn disputation in all the mysteries of the profession, before the face of every philomath,

student in astrology, and member of the learned societies. I adhere to and venerate the doctrines of old Wang-shu-ho. In the very teeth of opposition I will maintain "that the heart is the son of the liver, which has the kidneys for its mother, and the stomach for its wife."¹ I have, therefore, drawn up a disputation challenge, which is to be sent speedily, to this effect:

"I, Lien Chi Altangi, **D.M.R.P.** native of Honan in China, to Richard Rock, F.U.N., native of Garbage-alley, in Wapping, defiance. Though, Sir, I am perfectly sensible of your importance, though no stranger to your studies in the paths of nature, yet there may be many things in the art of physic with which you are yet unacquainted. I know full well a doctor thou art, great Rock, and so am I. Wherefore, I challenge and do hereby invite you to a trial of learning upon hard problems and knotty physical points. In this debate we will calmly investigate the whole theory and prac-

¹ See Du Halde, vol. ii. fol. p. 185.—GOLDSMITH. "A physician, whom Dr. Abel saw at Canton, was entirely destitute of anatomical knowledge. He appeared to be aware that there were such viscera as the heart, lungs, and liver, but had no notion of their real situation, or, like the Mock Doctor in *Molière*, placed them on the wrong sides of the body. The Chinese do not even know the distinction between arteries and veins, and not a syllable of the function of the lungs in oxygenising the blood, and getting rid of its superfluous carbon. Of the existence of certain sympathies between the different viscera, and of derangement being communicated to one by the disorders of another, they might seem to have some glimmering, and to express it strangely by calling the heart 'the husband,' and the lungs 'the wife,' etc."—DAVIS's *Chinese*, vol. ii., p. 284.

tice of medicine, botany, and chemistry; and I invite all the philomaths, with many of the lecturers in medicine, to be present at the dispute; which, I hope, will be carried on with due decorum, with proper gravity, and as befits men of erudition and science, among each other. But before we meet face to face, I would thus publicly, and in the face of the whole world, desire you to answer me one question; I ask it with the same earnestness with which you have often solicited the public; answer me, I say, at once, without having recourse to your physical dictionary, which of those three disorders, incident to the human body, is the most fatal—the syncope, parenthesis, or apoplexy? I beg your reply may be as public as this my demand.¹ I am, as hereafter may be, your admirer or your rival.”
Adieu.

¹ The day after this was published the editor received an answer, in which the doctor seems to be of opinion that the apoplexy is most fatal.—GOLDSMITH.

LETTER LXIX¹

THE FEAR OF MAD DOGS RIDICULED

To the Same

INDULGENT nature seems to have exempted this island from many of those epidemic evils which are so fatal in other parts of the world. A want of rain but for a few days beyond the expected season in China spreads famine, desolation, and terror over the whole country: [the winds that blow from the brown bosom of the western desert are impregnated with death in every gale;²] but in this fortunate land of Britain the inhabitant courts health in every breeze, and the husbandman ever sows in joyful expectation.

But, though the nation be exempt from real evils, think not, my friend, that it is more happy on this account than others. They are afflicted, it is true, with neither famine nor pestilence, but then there is a disorder peculiar to the country, which every

¹Reprinted by its author in 1765, with verbal alterations, as Essay XIII.

² The words in brackets are not in Essay XIII.

season makes strange ravages among them; it spreads with pestilential rapidity, and infects almost every rank of people; what is still more strange, the natives have no name for this peculiar malady, though well known to foreign physicians by the appellation of *epidemic terror*.

A season is never known to pass in which the people are not visited by this cruel calamity in one shape or another, seemingly different though ever the same: one year it issues from a baker's shop in the shape of a sixpenny loaf; the next, it takes the appearance of a comet with a fiery tail; a third, it threatens like a flat-bottomed boat; and a fourth, it carries consternation at the bite of a mad dog. The people, when once infected, lose their relish for happiness, saunter about with looks of despondence, ask after the calamities of the day, and receive no comfort but in heightening each other's distress. It is insignificant how remote or near, how weak or powerful the object of terror may be, when once they resolve to fright and be frightened; the merest trifles sow consternation and dismay! Each proportions his fears, not to the object, but to the dread he discovers in the countenance of others; for when once the fermentation is begun, it goes on of itself, though the original cause be discontinued which set it in motion.

A dread of mad dogs is the *epidemic terror* which now prevails; and the whole nation is at present actually groaning under the malignity of its influence. The people sally from their houses with that

circumspection which is prudent in such as expect a mad dog at every turning. The physician publishes his prescription, the beadle prepares his halter, and a few of unusual bravery arm themselves with boots and buff gloves, in order to face the enemy if he should offer to attack them. In short, the whole people stand bravely upon their defence, and seem, by their present spirit, to show a resolution of not being tamely bit by mad dogs any longer.

Their manner of knowing whether a dog be mad or no, somewhat resembles the ancient European custom of trying witches. The old woman suspected was tied hand and foot, and thrown into the water. If she swam, then she was instantly carried off to be burnt for a witch; if she sunk, then indeed she was acquitted of the charge, but drowned in the experiment. In the same manner a crowd gather round a dog suspected of madness, and they begin by teasing the devoted animal on every side; if he attempts to stand upon the defensive and bite, then he is unanimously found guilty, for "a mad dog always snaps at everything"; if, on the contrary, he strives to escape by running away, then he can expect no compassion, for "mad dogs always run straight forward before them."

It is pleasant enough for a neutral being like me, who have no share in these ideal calamities, to mark the stages of this national disease. The terror at first feebly enters with a disregarded story of

a little dog that had gone through a neighbouring village, that was thought to be mad by several that had seen him. The next account comes, that a mastiff ran through a certain town, and had bit five geese, which immediately ran mad, foamed at the bill, and died in great agonies soon after. Then comes an affecting history of a little boy bit in the leg, and gone down to be dipped in the salt water. When the people have sufficiently shuddered at that, they are next congealed with a frightful account of a man who was said lately to have died from a bite he had received some years before. This relation only prepares the way for another still more hideous, as how the master of a family, with seven small children, were all bit by a mad lap-dog; and how the poor father first perceived the infection, by calling for a draught of water, where he saw the lap-dog swimming in the cup.

When epidemic terror is thus once excited, every morning comes loaded with some new disaster: as in stories of ghosts each loves to hear the account, though it only serves to make him uneasy, so here each listens with eagerness, and adds to the tidings new circumstances of peculiar horror. A lady, for instance, in the country, of very weak nerves has been frightened by the barking of a dog; and this, alas! too frequently happens. The story soon is improved and spreads, that a mad dog had frightened a lady of distinction. These circumstances begin to grow terrible before they have reached the neighbouring village, and there the

report is, that a lady of quality was bit by a mad mastiff. This account every moment gathers new strength, and grows more dismal as it approaches the capital; and by the time it has arrived in town the lady is described, with wild eyes, foaming mouth, running mad upon all-four, barking like a dog, biting her servants, and at last smothered between two beds by the advice of her doctors; while the mad mastiff is in the meantime ranging the whole country over, slaving at the mouth, and seeking whom he may devour.

My landlady, a good-natured woman, but a little credulous, waked me some mornings ago before the usual hour, with horror and astonishment in her looks; she desired me, if I had any regard for my safety, to keep within; for a few days ago so dismal an accident had happened as to put all the world upon their guard. A mad dog down in the country, she assured me, had bit a farmer, who soon, becoming mad, ran into his own yard and bit a fine brindled cow; the cow quickly became as mad as the man, began to foam at the mouth, and raising herself up walked about on her hind legs, sometimes barking like a dog, and sometimes attempting to talk like the farmer. Upon examining the grounds of this story, I found my landlady had it from one neighbour, who had it from another neighbour, who heard it from very good authority.

Were most stories of this nature thoroughly examined, it would be found that numbers of such as have been said to suffer were no way injured;

and that of those who have been actually bitten not one in a hundred was bit by a mad dog. Such accounts in general, therefore, only serve to make the people miserable by false terrors, and sometimes fright the patient into actual phrenzy, by creating those very symptoms they pretended to deplore.

But even allowing three or four to die in a season of this terrible death (and four is probably too large a concession), yet still it is not considered how many are preserved in their health and in their property by this devoted animal's services. The midnight robber is kept at a distance; the insidious thief is often detected; the healthful chase repairs many a worn constitution; and the poor man finds in his dog a willing assistant, eager to lessen his toil, and content with the smallest retribution.

"A dog," says one of the English poets, "is an honest creature, and I am a friend to dogs."¹ Of all the beasts that graze the lawn or hunt the forest a dog is the only animal that, leaving his fellows, attempts to cultivate the friendship of man;² to man he looks in all his necessities with a speaking eye for assistance; exerts for him all the little service in his power with cheerfulness and pleasure;

¹ "A friend to dogs, for they are honest creatures
And ne'er betray their masters; never fawn
On any that they love not."

OTWAY, *Venice Preserved*, act ii. sc. 1.

² "The dog alone, of all brute animals, has a *στοργή*, or affection upwards to man."—COLERIDGE, *Table Talk*, vol. i., p. 111.

for him bears famine and fatigue with patience and resignation; no injuries can abate his fidelity, no distress induce him to forsake his benefactor; studious to please, and fearing to offend, he is still an humble, stedfast dependant, and in him alone fawning is not flattery. How unkind, then, to torture this faithful creature, who has left the forest to claim the protection of man! how ungrateful a return to the trusty animal for all his services. Adieu.

LETTER LXX

FORTUNE PROVED NOT TO BE BLIND—THE STORY OF THE AVARICIOUS MILLER

From Lien Chi Altangi to Hingpo, by the way of Moscow

THE Europeans are themselves blind who describe Fortune without sight. No first-rate beauty ever had finer eyes, or saw more clearly. They who have no other trade but seeking their fortune need never hope to find her; coquette like, she flies from her close pursuers, and at last fixes on the plodding mechanic, who stays at home and minds his business.

I am amazed how men can call her blind, when by the company she keeps she seems so very discerning. Wherever you see a gaming-table, be very sure Fortune is not there; wherever you see an house with the doors open, be very sure Fortune is not there; when you see a man whose pocket-holes are laced with gold, be satisfied Fortune is not there; wherever you see a beautiful woman good-natured and obliging, be convinced Fortune is not there. In short, she is ever seen

accompanying industry, and as often trundling a wheel-barrow as lolling in a coach and six.

If you would make Fortune your friend, or, to personise her no longer. if you desire, my son, to be rich and have money, be more eager to save than to acquire. When people say, "Money is to be got here, and money is to be got there," take no notice; mind your own business; stay where you are, and secure all you can get, without stirring. When you hear that your neighbour has picked up a purse of gold in the street, never run out into the street, looking about you in order to pick up such another; or when you are informed that he has made a fortune in one branch of business, never change your own in order to be his rival. Do not desire to be rich all at once, but patiently add farthing to farthing. Perhaps you despise the petty sum; and yet they who want a farthing, and have no friend that will lend them it, think farthings very good things. Whang, the foolish miller, when he wanted a farthing in his distress, found that no friend would lend, because they knew he wanted. Did you ever read the story of Whang in our books of Chinese learning—he who, despising small sums, and grasping at all, lost even what he had?

Whang, the miller, was naturally avaricious; nobody loved money better than he, or more respected those that had it. When people would talk of a rich man in company, Whang would say, I know him very well; he and I have been long acquainted; he and I are intimate; he stood for a

child of mine. But if ever a poor man was mentioned, he had not the least knowledge of the man; he might be very well for aught he knew; but he was not fond of many acquaintances, and loved to choose his company.

Whang, however, with all his eagerness for riches, was in reality poor; he had nothing but the profits of his mill to support him, but though these were small they were certain: while his mill stood and went, he was sure of eating; and his frugality was such that he every day laid some money by, which he would at intervals count and contemplate with much satisfaction. Yet still his acquisitions were not equal to his desires; he only found himself above want, whereas he desired to be possessed of affluence.

One day, as he was indulging these wishes, he was informed that a neighbour of his had found a pan of money under ground, having dreamed of it three nights running before. These tidings were daggers to the heart of poor Whang. "Here am I," says he, "toiling and moiling from morning till night for a few paltry farthings, while neighbour Hunks only goes quietly to bed, and dreams himself into thousands before morning. O that I could dream like him! with what pleasure would I dig round the pan; how slily would I carry it home—not even my wife should see me; and then, O the pleasure of thrusting one's hand into a heap of gold up to the elbow!"

Such reflections only served to make the miller

unhappy: he discontinued his former assiduity; he was quite disgusted with small gains, and his customers began to forsake him. Every day he repeated the wish, and every night laid himself down in order to dream. Fortune, that was for a long time unkind, at last, however, seemed to smile upon his distresses, and indulged him with the wished-for vision. He dreamed that under a certain part of the foundation of his mill there was concealed a monstrous pan of gold and diamonds, buried deep in the ground, and covered with a flat stone. He rose up, thanked the stars, that were at last pleased to take pity on his sufferings, and concealed his good luck from every person, as is usual in money dreams, in order to have the vision repeated the two succeeding nights, by which he should be certain of its veracity. His wishes in this also were answered; he still dreamed of the same pan of money, in the very same place.

Now, therefore, it was past a doubt; so, getting up early the third morning, he repairs alone, with a mattock in his hand, to the mill, and began to undermine that part of the wall to which the vision directed. The first omen of success that he met was a broken mug; digging still deeper, he turns up a house-tile quite new and entire. At last, after much digging, he came to the broad flat stone, but then so large that it was beyond one man's strength to remove it. "Here," cried he in raptures to himself, "here it is! under this stone there is room for a very large pan of diamonds indeed. I must e'en

go home to my wife, and tell her the whole affair, and get her to assist me in turning it up." Away therefore he goes, and acquaints his wife with every circumstance of their good fortune. Her raptures on this occasion easily may be imagined; she flew round his neck, and embraced him in an agony of joy; but those transports, however, did not delay their eagerness to know the exact sum. Returning, therefore, speedily together to the place where Whang had been digging, there they found—not indeed the expected treasure, but the mill, their only support, undermined and fallen. Adieu.

LETTER LXXI

THE SHABBY BEAU, THE MAN IN BLACK, THE CHINESE PHILOSOPHER, ETC., AT VAUXHALL

From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, First President of the Ceremonial Academy at Peking, in China

THE people of London are as fond of walking as our friends at Peking of riding: one of the principal entertainments of the citizens here in summer is to repair about nightfall to a garden¹ not far from town, where they walk about, show their best clothes and best faces, and listen to a concert provided for the occasion.

I accepted an invitation a few evenings ago from my old friend the Man in Black to be one of a party that was to sup there; and at the appointed hour waited upon him at his lodgings. There I

¹ Vauxhall Gardens, at this time the property of Jonathan Tyers, Esq. (died 1767), father of "Tom Tyers," the friend of Johnson and Goldsmith. "Tyers was a worthy man, but indulged himself a little too much in a querulous strain when anything went amiss, insomuch that he said, if he had been brought up a hatter, he believed people would have been born without heads. A farmer once gave him a humorous reproof for this kind of reproach of heaven: he stepped up to him very respectfully, and asked him when he meant to open his gardens. Mr. Tyers replied, 'The next

found the company assembled and expecting my arrival. Our party consisted of my friend in superlative finery, his stockings rolled, a black velvet waistcoat which was formerly new, and his grey wig combed down in imitation of hair; a pawnbroker's widow, of whom, by the bye, my friend was a professed admirer, dressed out in green damask, with three gold rings on every finger; Mr. Tibbs, the second-rate beau I have formerly described, together with his lady in flimsy silk, dirty gauze instead of linen, and an hat as big as an umbrella.

Our first difficulty was in settling how we should set out. Mrs. Tibbs had a natural aversion to the water, and the widow, being a little in flesh, as warmly protested against walking; a coach was therefore agreed upon; which being too small to carry five, Mr. Tibbs consented to sit in his wife's lap.

In this manner, therefore, we set forward, being entertained by the way with the bodings of Mr. Tibbs, who assured us he did not expect to see a single creature for the evening above the degree of a cheesemonger; that this was the last night of the Gardens, and that consequently we should be pestered with the nobility and gentry from

Monday fortnight.' The man thanked him repeatedly and was going away; but Mr. Tyers asked him in return what made him so anxious to know. 'Why, Sir,' said the farmer, 'I think of sowing my turnips on that day, for you know we shall *be sure to have rain.*' "

—*Brasbridge's Memoir*, p. 134. See *art.* "Vauxhall Gardens" in *Cunningham's Hand-Book of London*, 2nd edition, 1850.

Thames Street and Crooked Lane, with several other pathetic ejaculations, probably inspired by the uneasiness of his situation.

The illuminations began before we arrived, and I must confess that upon entering the Gardens I found every sense overpaid with more than expected pleasure; the lights everywhere glimmering through the scarcely-moving trees, the full-bodied concert bursting on the stillness of the night, the natural concert of the birds in the more retired part of the grove vying with that which was formed by art, the company gaily dressed, looking satisfaction, and the tables spread with various delicacies, all conspired to fill my imagination with the visionary happiness of the Arabian lawgiver, and lifted me into an ecstasy of admiration.¹ "Head of Confucius," cried I to my friend, "this is fine! this unites rural beauty with courtly magnificence! If we except the virgins of immortality that hang on every tree, and may be plucked at every desire, I do not see how this falls short of Mahomet's

¹ "In the midst of the garden is a superb orchestra, containing a fine organ, with a band of music and some of the best voices. In most of the boxes are pictures painted from the designs of Hayman [and Hogarth] on subjects of humour well adapted to the place. The trees are scattered with a pleasing confusion; there are several noble vistas through very tall trees, the spaces between being filled up with neat hedges; and on the inside are planted flowers and sweet-smelling shrubs. Some terminate by paintings representing ruins of buildings, others a prospect of a distant country, and some of triumphal arches. There are several statues, particularly a good one in marble by Roubiliac, of Handel in the character of Orpheus, playing on a lyre."—DODSLEY'S *London*, 1760. The price of admission at this time was one shilling.

paradise!"¹ "As for virgins," cries my friend, "it is true they are a fruit that do not much abound in our Gardens here; but if ladies, as plenty as apples in autumn, and as complying as any houri of them all, can content you, I fancy we have no need to go to heaven for paradise."

I was going to second his remarks when we were called to a consultation by Mr. Tibbs and the rest of the company, to know in what manner we were to lay out the evening to the greatest advantage. Mrs. Tibbs was for keeping the genteel walk of the garden, where, she observed, there was always the very best company; the widow, on the contrary, who came but once a season, was for securing a good standing-place to see the water-works, which she assured us would begin in less than an hour at farthest: a dispute therefore began, and, as it was managed between two of very opposite characters, it threatened to grow more bitter at every reply. Mrs. Tibbs wondered how people could pretend to know the polite world, who had received all their rudiments of breeding behind a counter; to which the other replied that, though some people sat behind counters, yet they could sit at the head of their own tables too, and carve three good dishes of hot meat whenever they

¹ "We were now arrived at Spring-garden [Vauxhall], which is exquisitely pleasant at this time of the year. When I consider the fragrancy of the walks and bowers, with the choir of birds that sang upon the trees, and the loose tribe of people that walked under their shades, I could not but look on the place as a kind of Mahometan paradise."—ADDISON, *The Spectator*, No. 383.



thought proper; which was more than some people could say for themselves, that hardly knew a rabbit and onions from a green goose and gooseberries.

It is hard to say where this might have ended had not the husband, who probably knew the impetuosity of his wife's disposition, proposed to end the dispute by adjourning to a box, and try if there was anything to be had for supper that was supportable. To this we all consented, but here a new distress arose: Mr. and Mrs. Tibbs would sit in none but a genteel box, a box where they might see and be seen; one, as they expressed it, in the very focus of public view; but such a box was not easy to be obtained, for though we were perfectly convinced of our own gentility, and the gentility of our appearance, yet we found it a difficult matter to persuade the keepers of the boxes to be of our opinion; they chose to reserve genteel boxes for what they judged more genteel company.

At last, however, we were fixed, though somewhat obscurely, and supplied with the usual entertainment of the place. The widow found the supper excellent, but Mrs. Tibbs thought everything detestable. "Come, come, my dear," cries the husband, by way of consolation, "to be sure we can't find such dressing here as we have at Lord Crump's, or Lady Crimp's; but for Vauxhall dressing it is pretty good: it is not their victuals indeed I find fault with, but their wine; their

wine," cries he, drinking off a glass, "indeed, is most abominable."

By this last contradiction, the widow was fairly conquered in point of politeness. She perceived now that she had no pretensions in the world to taste; her very senses were vulgar, since she had praised detestable custard, and smacked at wretched wine; she was therefore content to yield the victory, and for the rest of the night to listen and improve. It is true, she would now and then forget herself, and confess she was pleased, but they soon brought her back again to miserable refinement. She once praised the painting of the box in which we were sitting, but was soon convinced that such paltry pieces ought rather to excite horror than satisfaction; she ventured again to commend one of the singers, but Mrs. Tibbs soon let her know, in the style of a connoisseur, that the singer in question had neither ear, voice, nor judgment.

Mr. Tibbs, now willing to prove that his wife's pretensions to music were just, entreated her to favour the company with a song; but to this she gave a positive denial—"for you know very well, my dear," says she, "that I am not in voice to-day, and when one's voice is not equal to one's judgment, what signifies singing? Besides, as there is no accompaniment, it would be but spoiling music." All these excuses, however, were overruled by the rest of the company, who, though one would think they already had music enough, joined in the

entreaty. But particularly the widow, now willing to convince the company of her breeding, pressed so warmly that she seemed determined to take no refusal. At last then the lady complied, and after humming for some minutes began, with such a voice, and such affectation, as I could perceive gave but little satisfaction to any except her husband. He sat with rapture in his eye, and beat time with his hand on the table.

You must observe, my friend, that it is the custom of this country, when a lady or gentleman happens to sing, for the company to sit as mute and motionless as statues. Every feature, every limb, must seem to correspond in fixed attention; and while the song continues, they are to remain in a state of universal petrification. In this mortifying situation we had continued for some time, listening to the song, and looking with tranquillity, when the master of the box came to inform us that the water-works were going to begin. At this information I could instantly perceive the widow bounce from her seat; but, correcting herself, she sat down again, repressed by motives of good breeding. Mrs. Tibbs, who had seen the water-works an hundred times, resolving not to be interrupted, continued her song without any share of mercy, nor had the smallest pity on our impatience. The widow's face, I own, gave me high entertainment: in it I could plainly read the struggle she felt between good breeding and curiosity; she talked of the water-works the whole evening before, and

seemed to have come merely in order to see them; but then she could not bounce out in the very middle of a song, for that would be forfeiting all pretensions to high life, or high-lived company, ever after. Mrs. Tibbs therefore kept on singing, and we continued to listen, till at last, when the song was just concluded, the waiter came to inform us that the water-works were over.

"The water-works over!" cried the widow; "the water-works over already! that's impossible; they can't be over so soon!" "It is not my business," replied the fellow, "to contradict your ladyship; I'll run again and see." He went, and soon returned with a confirmation of the dismal tidings. No ceremony could now bind my friend's disappointed mistress, she testified her displeasure in the openest manner; in short, she now began to find fault in turn, and at last insisted upon going home, just at that time that Mr. and Mrs. Tibbs assured the company that the polite hours were going to begin, and that the ladies would instantaneously be entertained with the horns. Adieu.

LETTER LXXII

THE MARRIAGE ACT CENSURED

From the Same

NOT far from the city lives a poor tinker, who has educated seven sons, all at this very time in arms, and fighting for their country; and what reward, do you think, has the tinker from the state for such important services? None in the world: his sons, when the war is over, may probably be whipped from parish to parish as vagabonds, and the old man, when past labour, may die a prisoner in some house of correction.

Such a worthy subject in China would be held in universal reverence; his services would be rewarded, if not with dignities, at least with an exemption from labour; he would take the left hand at feasts, and mandarins themselves would be proud to show submission. The English laws punish vice: the Chinese laws do more, they reward virtue.

Considering the little encouragement given to matrimony here, I am not surprised at the dis-

couragements given to propagation. Would you believe it, my dear Fum Hoam, there are laws made which even forbid the people's marrying each other! By the head of Confucius, I jest not; there are such laws in being here; and yet their lawgivers have neither been instructed among the Hottentots, nor imbibed their principles of equity from the natives of Anamaboo.

There are laws which ordain that no man shall marry a woman against her own consent. This, though contrary to what we are taught in Asia, and though in some measure a clog upon matrimony, I have no great objection to. There are laws which ordain that no woman shall marry against her father and mother's consent, unless arrived at an age of maturity; by which is understood, those years when women with us are generally past child-bearing. This must be a clog upon matrimony, as it is more difficult for the lover to please three than one, and much more difficult to please old people than young ones. The laws ordain that the consenting couple shall take a long time to consider before they marry: this is a very great clog, because people love to have all rash actions done in a hurry. It is ordained that all marriages shall be proclaimed before celebration: this is a severe clog, as many are ashamed to have their marriage made public, from motives of vicious modesty, and many afraid from views of temporal interest. It is ordained that there is nothing sacred in the ceremony, but that it may be

dissolved, to all intents and purposes, by the authority of any civil magistrate. And yet, opposite to this, it is ordained that the priest shall be paid a large sum of money for granting his sacred permission.

Thus you see, my friend, that matrimony here is hedged round with so many obstructions that those who are willing to break through or surmount them must be contented, if at last they find it a bed of thorns. The laws are not to blame, for they have deterred the people from engaging as much as they could. It is, indeed, become a very serious affair in England and none but serious people are generally found willing to engage. The young, the gay, and the beautiful, who have motives of passion only to induce them, are seldom found to embark, as those inducements are taken away; and none but the old, the ugly, and the mercenary are seen to unite, who, if they have any posterity at all, will probably be an ill-favoured race like themselves.

What gave rise to those laws might have been some such accidents as these. It sometimes happened that a miser, who had spent all his youth in scraping up money to give his daughter such a fortune as might get her a mandarin husband, found his expectations disappointed at last, by her running away with his footman: this must have been a sad shock to the poor disconsolate parent, to see his poor daughter in a one-horse chaise when he had designed her for a coach and six. What a

stroke from Providence! to see his dear money go to enrich a beggar; all nature cried out at the profanation.

It sometimes happened, also, that a lady who had inherited all the titles and all the nervous complaints of nobility, thought fit to impair her dignity and mend her constitution by marrying a farmer: this must have been a sad shock to her inconsolable relations, to see so fine a flower snatched from a flourishing family, and planted in a dunghill; this was an absolute inversion of the first principles of things.

In order, therefore, to prevent the great from being thus contaminated by vulgar alliances, the obstacles to matrimony have been so contrived that the rich only can marry amongst the rich, and the poor who would leave celibacy must be content to increase their poverty with a wife. Thus have their laws fairly inverted the inducements to matrimony. Nature tells us that beauty is the proper allurements of those who are poor; but things here are so contrived that the rich are invited to marry by that fortune which they do not want, and the poor have no inducement but that beauty which they do not feel.

An equal diffusion of riches through any country ever constitutes its happiness. Great wealth in the possession of one stagnates, and extreme poverty with another keeps him in unambitious indigence; but the moderately rich are generally active: not too far removed from poverty to fear

its calamities, nor too near extreme wealth to slacken the nerve of labour, they remain still between both in a state of continual fluctuation. How impolitic, therefore, are those laws which promote the accumulation of wealth among the rich; more impolitic still, in attempting to increase the depression on poverty.

Bacon, the English philosopher, compares money to manure: "If gathered in heaps," says he, "it does no good; on the contrary, it becomes offensive; but being spread, though never so thinly, over the surface of the earth, it enriches the whole country." Thus, the wealth a nation possesses must expatiate, or it is of no benefit to the public; it becomes rather a grievance where matrimonial laws thus confine it to a few.

But this restraint upon matrimonial community, even considered in a physical light, is injurious. As those who rear up animals take all possible pains to cross the strain, in order to improve the breed, so in those countries where marriage is most free the inhabitants are found every age to improve in stature and in beauty; on the contrary, where it is confined to a caste, a tribe, or an horde, as among the Gaours, the Jews, or the Tartars, each division soon assumes a family likeness, and every tribe degenerates into peculiar deformity. Hence it may be easily inferred that, if the mandarins here are resolved only to marry among each other, they will soon produce a posterity with mandarin faces; and we shall see the heir of some honourable

family scarce equal to the abortion of a country farmer.

These are a few of the obstacles to marriage here; and it is certain they have in some measure answered the end, for celibacy is both frequent and fashionable. Old bachelors appear abroad without a mask, and old maids, my dear Fum Hoam, have been absolutely known to ogle. To confess in friendship, if I were an Englishman, I fancy I should be an old bachelor myself; I should never find courage to run through all the adventures prescribed by the law. I could submit to court my mistress herself upon reasonable terms; but to court her father, her mother, and a long tribe of cousins, aunts, and relations, and then stand the butt of a whole country church—I would as soon turn tail and make love to her grandmother.

I can conceive no other reason for thus loading matrimony with so many prohibitions, unless it be that the country was thought already too populous, and this was found to be the most effectual means of thinning it. If this was the motive, I cannot but congratulate the wise projectors on the success of their scheme. “Hail, O ye dim-sighted politicians, ye weeders of men! ’T is yours to clip the wing of industry, and convert Hymen to a broker. ’T is yours to behold small objects with a microscopic eye, but to be blind to those which require an extent of vision. ’T is yours, O ye discerners of mankind, to lay the line between society, and weaken that force by dividing, which

should bind with united vigour. 'T is yours to introduce national real distress, in order to avoid the imaginary distresses of a few. Your actions can be justified by an hundred reasons like truth; they can be opposed by but a few reasons, and those reasons are true." Farewell.

LETTER LXXIII

LIFE ENDEARED BY AGE ¹

From Lien Chi Altangi to Hingpo, by the way of Moscow

AGE, that lessens the enjoyment of life, increases our desire of living. Those dangers which, in the vigour of youth, we had learned to despise, assume new terrors as we grow old. Our caution increasing as our years increase, fear becomes at last the prevailing passion of the mind; and the small remainder of life is taken up in useless efforts to keep off our end, or provide for a continued existence.

Strange contradiction in our nature, and to which even the wise are liable! If I should judge of that part of life which lies before me by that which I have already seen, the prospect is hideous.² Experience tells me that my past enjoyments have brought no real felicity; and sensation

¹ Reprinted in the *Essays*, 1765, as Essay XIV.

² "*Honeywood*.—To say truth, if we compare that part of life which is to come by that which is past, the prospect is hideous."
—GOLDSMITH, *The Good-Natured Man*, act i.

assures me that those I have felt are stronger than those which are yet to come. Yet experience and sensation in vain persuade; hope, more powerful than either, dresses out the distant prospect in fancied beauty, some happiness in long perspective still beckons me to pursue, and, like a losing gamester, every new disappointment increases my ardour to continue the game.

Whence, my friend, this increased love of life, which grows upon us with our years? whence comes it that we thus make greater efforts to preserve our existence at a period when it becomes scarce worth the keeping? Is it that nature, attentive to the preservation of mankind, increases our wishes to live, while she lessens our enjoyments; and, as she robs the senses of every pleasure, equips imagination in the spoil? Life would be insupportable to an old man, who, loaded with infirmities, feared death no more than when in the vigour of manhood; the numberless calamities of decaying nature, and the consciousness of surviving every pleasure, would at once induce him, with his own hand, to terminate the scene of misery; but happily the contempt of death forsakes him at a time when it could only be prejudicial; and life acquires an imaginary value in proportion as its real value is no more.

Our attachment to every object around us increases, in general, from the length of our acquaintance with it. "I would not choose," says a French philosopher, "to see an old post pulled up

with which I had been long acquainted." A mind long habituated to a certain set of objects insensibly becomes fond of seeing them; visits them from habit, and parts from them with reluctance;¹ from hence proceeds the avarice of the old in every kind of possession. They love the world and all that it produces, they love life and all its advantages, not because it gives them pleasure, but because they have known it long.

Chinwang the Chaste, ascending the throne of China, commanded that all who were unjustly detained in prison, during the preceding reigns, should be set free. Among the number who came to thank their deliverer on this occasion there appeared a majestic old man, who, falling at the emperor's feet, addressed him as follows: "Great father of China, behold a wretch now eighty-five years old, who was shut up in a dungeon at the age of twenty-two. I was imprisoned, though a stranger to crime, or without being even confronted by my accusers. I have now lived in solitude and in darkness for more than fifty years, and am grown familiar with distress. As yet, dazzled with the

¹ When Cardinal Richelieu built his magnificent palace on the site of the old family château at Richelieu, he sacrificed its symmetry to preserve the room in which he was born. See *Mém. de Montponstier*, t. i., p. 27. When the Duke of Lenox wished to buy, or obtain by exchange, York House, in the Strand, Lord Bacon, to whom it belonged, replied: "For this you will pardon me; York House still is the house where my father died, and where I first breathed, and there will I yield my last breath, if so please God and the king."—See CUNNINGHAM'S *Hand-Book of London*, ed. 1850, p. 560.

splendour of that sun to which you have restored me, I have been wandering the streets to find some friend that would assist, or relieve, or remember me; but my friends, my family, and relations are all dead, and I am forgotten. Permit me then, O Chinvang, to wear out the wretched remains of my life in my former prison: the walls of my dungeon are to me more pleasing than the most splendid palace; I have not long to live, and shall be unhappy except I spend the rest of my days where my youth was passed—in that prison from whence you were pleased to release me.”

The old man's passion for confinement is similar to that we all have for life. We are habituated to the prison, we look round with discontent, are displeased with the abode, and yet the length of our captivity only increases our fondness for the cell. The trees we have planted, the houses we have built, or the posterity we have begotten, all serve to bind us closer to earth, and embitter our parting. Life sues the young like a new acquaintance: the companion, as yet unexhausted, is at once instructive and amusing; its company pleases; yet, for all this, it is but little regarded. To us, who are declined in years, life appears like an old friend; its jests have been anticipated in former conversation; it has no new story to make us smile, no new improvement with which to surprise: yet still we love it: destitute of every agreement still we love it, husband the wasting treasure with increased

frugality, and feel all the poignancy of anguish in the fatal separation.¹

Sir Philip Mordaunt was young, beautiful, sincere, brave, an Englishman. He had a complete fortune of his own, and the love of the king his master, which was equivalent to riches. Life opened all her treasure before him, and promised a long succession of future happiness. He came, tasted of the entertainment, but was disgusted even in the beginning. He professed an aversion to living; was tired of walking round the same circle; had tried every enjoyment, and found them all grow weaker at every repetition. "If life be in youth so displeasing," cried he to himself, "what will it appear when age comes on; if it be at present

¹ "I have heard Mr. Burke make use of a very ingenious and plausible argument on this subject: 'Every man,' said he, 'would lead his life over again; for every man is willing to go on and take an addition to his life, which, as he grows older, he has no reason to think will be better, or even so good as what has preceded.' I imagine, however, the truth is that there is a deceitful hope that the next part of life will be free from the pains, and anxieties, and sorrows, which we have already felt. We are for wise purposes 'condemned to Hope's delusive mine,' as Johnson finely says; and I may also quote the celebrated lines of Dryden, equally philosophical and poetical:—

'When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat,
Yet, fool'd with hope, men favour the deceit—
Trust on and think to-morrow will repay:
To-morrow 's falser than the former day,
Lies worse, and, while it says we shall be blest
With some new joys, cuts off what we possess.
Strange cozenage! none would live past years again;
Yet all hope pleasure in what yet remain;
And from the dregs of life think to receive
What the first sprightly running could not give.' "

BOSWELL'S *Life of Johnson*, ed. CROKER, p. 764.

indifferent, sure it will then be execrable." This thought embittered every reflection; till at last, with all the serenity of perverted reason, he ended the debate with a pistol! Had this self-deluded man been apprised that existence grows more desirable to us the longer we exist, he would have then faced old age without shrinking, he would have boldly dared to live, and served that society by his future assiduity which he basely injured by his desertion. Adieu.

LETTER LXXIV

THE DESCRIPTION OF A LITTLE GREAT MAN

From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, First President of the Ceremonial Academy at Pekin, in China

I N reading the newspapers here, I have reckoned up not less than twenty-five great men, seventeen very great men, and nine very extraordinary men, in less than the compass of half a year. "These," say the gazettes, "are the men that posterity are to gaze at with admiration; these the names that fame will be employed in holding up for the astonishment of succeeding ages." Let me see—forty-six great men in half a year amount just to ninety-two in a year. I wonder how posterity will be able to remember them all, or whether the people, in the future times, will have any other business to mind but that of getting the catalogue by heart.

Does the mayor of a corporation make a speech? he is instantly set down for a great man. Does a pedant digest his commonplace-book into a folio? he quickly becomes great. Does a poet string up trite sentiments in rhyme? he also

becomes the great man of the hour. How diminutive soever the object of admiration, each is followed by a crowd of still more diminutive admirers. The shout begins in his train, onward he marches towards immortality, looks back at the pursuing crowd with self-satisfaction; catching all the oddities, the whimsies, the absurdities, and the littlenesses of conscious greatness, by the way.

I was yesterday invited by a gentleman to dinner, who promised that our entertainment should consist of an haunch of venison, a turtle, and a great man. I came according to appointment. The venison was fine, the turtle good, but the great man insupportable. The moment I ventured to speak, I was at once contradicted with a snap. I attempted by a second and a third assault to retrieve my lost reputation, but was still beat back with confusion. I was resolved to attack him once more from entrenchment, and turned the conversation upon the government of China, but even here he asserted, snapped, and contradicted as before. Heavens, thought I, this man pretends to know China even better than myself! I looked round to see who was on my side, but every eye was fixed in admiration on the great man. I therefore at last thought proper to sit silent, and act the pretty gentleman during the ensuing conversation.

When a man has once secured a circle of admirers, he may be as ridiculous here as he thinks proper; and it all passes for elevation of sentiment, or learned absence. If he transgresses the common

forms of breeding, mistakes even a teapot for a tobacco-box, it is said that his thoughts are fixed on more important objects: to speak and to act like the rest of mankind is to be no greater than they. There is something of oddity in the very idea of greatness; for we are seldom astonished at a thing very much resembling ourselves.

When the Tartars make a Lama, their first care is to place him in a dark corner of the temple; here he is to sit half concealed from view, to regulate the motion of his hands, lips, and eyes; but, above all, he is enjoined gravity and silence. This, however, is but the prelude to his apotheosis: a set of emissaries are despatched among the people, to cry up his piety, gravity, and love of raw flesh; the people take them at their word, approach the Lama, now become an idol, with the most humble prostration; he receives their addresses without motion, commences a god, and is ever after fed by his priests with the spoon of immortality. The same receipt in this country serves to make a great man. The idol only keeps close, sends out his little emissaries to be hearty in his praise; and straight, whether statesman or author, he is set down in the list of fame, continuing to be praised while it is fashionable to praise, or while he prudently keeps his minuteness concealed from the public.

I have visited many countries, and have been in cities without number, yet never did I enter a town which could not produce ten or twelve of

those little great men; all fancying themselves known to the rest of the world, and complimenting each other upon their extensive reputation. It is amusing enough when two of those domestic prodigies of learning mount the stage of ceremony, and give and take praise from each other. I have been present when a German doctor, for having pronounced a panegyric upon a certain monk, was thought the most ingenious man in the world—till the monk soon after divided this reputation by returning the compliment; by which means they both marched off with universal applause.

The same degree of undeserved adulation that attends our great man while living often also follows him to the tomb. It frequently happens that one of his little admirers sits down big with the important subject, and is delivered of the history of his life and writings. This may probably be called the revolutions of a life between the fireside and the easy-chair. In this we learn the year in which he was born, at what an early age he gave symptoms of uncommon genius and application, together with some of his smart sayings, collected by his aunt and his mother, while yet but a boy. The next book introduces him to the university, where we are informed of his amazing progress in learning, his excellent skill in darning stockings, and his new invention for papering books to save the covers. He next makes his appearance in the republic of letters, and publishes his folio. Now the colossus is reared, his works are eagerly bought

up by all the purchasers of scarce books. The learned societies invite him to become a member; he disputes against some foreigner with a long Latin name, conquers in the controversy, is complimented by several authors of gravity and importance, is excessively fond of egg-sauce with his pig, becomes president of a literary club, and dies in the meridian of his glory. Happy they who thus have some little faithful attendant, who never forsakes them, but prepares to wrangle and to praise against every opposer; at once ready to increase their pride while living, and their character when dead. For you and I, my friend, who have no humble admirer thus to attend us, we who neither are nor ever will be great men, and who do not much care whether we are great men or no, at least let us strive to be honest men, and to have common-sense. Adieu.

LETTER LXXV

THE NECESSITY OF AMUSING EACH OTHER WITH NEW BOOKS INSISTED UPON

To the Same

THERE are numbers in this city who live by writing new books; and yet there are thousands of volumes in every large library unread and forgotten. This, upon my arrival, was one of those contradictions which I was unable to account for. Is it possible, said I, that there should be any demand for new books before those already published are read? Can there be so many employed producing a commodity with which the market is already overstocked, and with goods also better than any of modern manufacture?

What at first view appeared an inconsistency is a proof at once of this people's wisdom and refinement. Even allowing the works of their ancestors better written than theirs, yet those of the moderns acquire a real value by being marked with the impression of the times. Antiquity has been in

the possession of others: the present is our own. Let us first, therefore, learn to know what belongs to ourselves, and then, if we have leisure, cast our reflections back to the reign of Shonou, who governed twenty thousand years before the creation of the moon.

The volumes of antiquity, like medals, may very well serve to amuse the curious; but the works of the moderns, like the current coin of a kingdom, are much better for immediate use: the former are often prized above their intrinsic value, and kept with care; the latter seldom pass for more than they are worth, and are often subjected to the merciless hands of sweating critics and clipping compilers; the works of antiquity were ever praised, those of the moderns read; the treasures of our ancestors have our esteem, and we boast the passion; those of contemporary genius engage our heart, although we blush to own it. The visits we pay the former resemble those we pay the great; the ceremony is troublesome, and yet such as we would not choose to forego; our acquaintance with modern books is like sitting with a friend; our pride is not flattered in the interview, but it gives more internal satisfaction.

In proportion as society refines, new books must ever become more necessary. Savage rusticity is reclaimed by oral admonition alone; but the elegant excesses of refinement are best corrected by the still voice of a studious inquiry. In a polite age, almost every person becomes a reader,

and receives more instruction from the press than the pulpit. The preaching bonze may instruct the illiterate peasant; but nothing less than the insinuating address of a fine writer can win its way to any heart already relaxed in all the effeminacy of refinement. Books are necessary to correct the vices of the polite; but those vices are ever changing, and the antidote should be changed accordingly—should still be new.

Instead, therefore, of thinking the number of new publications here too great, I could wish it still greater, as they are the most usual instruments of reformation. Every country must be instructed either by writers or preachers, but as the number of readers increases, the number of hearers is proportionably diminished, the writer becomes more useful, and the preaching bonze less necessary.

Instead, therefore, of complaining that writers are over-paid, when their works procure them a bare subsistence, I should imagine it the duty of a state not only to encourage their numbers but their industry. A bonze is rewarded with immense riches for instructing only a few, even of the most ignorant of the people; and sure the poor scholar should not beg his bread, who is capable of instructing a million.

Of all rewards, I grant, the most pleasing to a man of real merit is fame; but a polite age, of all times, is that in which scarcely any share of merit can acquire it. What numbers of fine writers in

the latter empire of Rome, when refinement was carried to the highest pitch, have missed that fame and immortality which they had fondly arrogated to themselves! How many Greek authors, who wrote at that period when Constantinople was the refined mistress of the empire, now rest, either not printed or not read, in the libraries of Europe! Those who came first, while either state as yet was barbarous, carried all the reputation away. Authors, as the age refined, became more numerous, and their numbers destroyed their fame. It is but natural, therefore, for the writer, when conscious that his works will not produce him fame hereafter, to endeavour to make them turn out to his temporal interest here.

Whatever be the motives which induce men to write, whether avarice or fame, the country becomes the most wise and happy in which they most serve for instructors. The countries where sacerdotal instruction alone is permitted remain in ignorance, superstition, and hopeless slavery. In England, where there are as many new books published as in all the rest of Europe together, a spirit of freedom and reason reigns among the people: they have been often known to act like fools, they are generally found to think like men.

The only danger that attends a multiplicity of publications is that some of them may be calculated to injure, rather than benefit society. But

where writers are numerous they also serve as a check upon each other; and perhaps a literary inquisition is the most terrible punishment that can be conceived, to a literary transgressor.

But, to do the English justice, there are but few offenders of this kind; their publications in general aim at mending either the heart, or improving the common weal. The dullest writer talks of virtue, and liberty, and benevolence, with esteem; tells his true story, filled with good and wholesome advice; warns against slavery, bribery, or the bite of a mad dog; and dresses up his little useful magazine of knowledge and entertainment at least with a good intention. The dunces of France, on the other hand, who have less encouragement, are more vicious. Tender hearts, languishing eyes, Leonora in love at thirteen, ecstatic transports, stolen blisses, are the frivolous subjects of their frivolous memoirs. In England, if a bawdy blockhead thus breaks in on the community, he sets his whole fraternity in a roar; nor can he escape, even though he should fly to nobility for shelter.

Thus even dunces, my friend, may make themselves useful. But there are others whom nature has blest with talents above the rest of mankind; men capable of thinking with precision and impressing their thoughts with rapidity; beings who diffuse those regards upon mankind which others contract and settle upon themselves. These de-

serve every honour from that community of which they are more peculiarly the children; to such I would give my heart, since to them I am indebted for its humanity! Adieu.

LETTER LXXVI

THE PREFERENCE OF GRACE TO BEAUTY; AN ALLEGORY

From Hingpo to Lien Chi Altangi, by the way of Moscow

I STILL remain at Terki, where I have received that money which was remitted here in order to release me from captivity. My fair companion still improves in my esteem; the more I know her mind, her beauty becomes more poignant: she appears charming even among the daughters of Circassia.

Yet were I to examine her beauty with the art of a statuary I should find numbers here that far surpass her: nature has not granted her all the boasted Circassian regularity of feature, and yet she greatly exceeds the fairest of the country in the art of seizing the affections. "Whence," have I often said to myself, "this resistless magic that attends even moderate charms? though I regard the beauties of the country with admiration, every interview weakens the impression, but

the form of Zelis grows upon my imagination; I never behold her without an increase of tenderness and respect. Whence this injustice of the mind, in preferring imperfect beauty to that which nature seems to have finished with care? Whence the infatuation, that he whom a comet could not amaze should be astonished at a meteor!" When reason was thus fatigued to find an answer, my imagination pursued the subject, and this was the result.

I fancied myself placed between two landscapes, this called the Region of Beauty, and that the Valley of the Graces; the one adorned with all that luxuriant nature could bestow: the fruits of various climates adorned the trees, the grove resounded with music, the gale breathed perfume, every charm that could arise from symmetry and exact distribution were here conspicuous, the whole offering a prospect of pleasure without end. The Valley of the Graces, on the other hand, seemed by no means so inviting; the streams and the groves appeared just as they usually do in frequented countries; no magnificent parterres, no concert in the grove, the rivulet was edged with weeds, and the rook joined its voice to that of the nightingale. All was simplicity and nature.

The most striking objects ever first allure the traveller. I entered the Region of Beauty with increased curiosity, and promised myself endless satisfaction in being introduced to the presiding

goddess. I perceived several strangers who entered with the same design; and what surprised me not a little was to see several others hastening to leave this abode of seeming felicity.

After some fatigue I had at last the honour of being introduced to the goddess, who represented Beauty in person. She was seated on a throne, at the foot of which stood several strangers, lately introduced like me; all regarding her form in ecstasy. "Ah, what eyes! what lips! how clear her complexion! how perfect her shape!" At these exclamations Beauty, with downcast eyes, would endeavour to counterfeit modesty, but soon again looking around as if to confirm every spectator in his favourable sentiments; sometimes she would attempt to allure us by smiles; and at intervals would bridle back, in order to inspire us with respect as well as tenderness.

This ceremony lasted for some time, and had so much employed our eyes that we had forgot all this while that the goddess was silent. We soon, however, began to perceive the defect: "What," said we among each other, "are we to have nothing but languishing airs, soft looks, and inclinations of the head; will the goddess only deign to satisfy our eyes?" Upon this one of the company stepped up to present her with some fruits he had gathered by the way. She received the present most sweetly smiling, and with one of the whitest hands in the world, but still not a word escaped her lips.

I now found that my companions grew weary of their homage; they went off one by one, and resolving not to be left behind I offered to go in my turn, when, just at the door of the temple, I was called back by a female, whose name was Pride, and who seemed displeased at the behaviour of the company. "Where are you hastening?" said she to me with an angry air, "the goddess of Beauty is here." "I have been to visit her, Madam," replied I, "and find her more beautiful even than report had made her." "And why then will you leave her?" added the female. "I have seen her long enough," returned I; "I have got all her features by heart. Her eyes are still the same. Her nose is a very fine one, but it is such a nose now as it was half an hour ago: could she throw a little more mind into her face, perhaps I should be for wishing to have more of her company." "What signifies," replied my female, "whether she has a mind or not; has she any occasion for a mind, so formed as she is by nature? If she had a common face, indeed, there might be some reason for thinking to improve it; but when features are already perfect, every alteration would but impair them. A fine face is already at the point of perfection, and a fine lady should endeavour to keep it so: the impression it would receive from thought would but disturb its whole economy.

To this speech I gave no reply, but made the best of my [way] to the Valley of the Graces. Here I found all those who before had been my com-

panions in the Region of Beauty, now upon the same errand.

As we entered the valley, the prospect insensibly seemed to improve; we found everything so natural, so domestic and pleasing, that our minds, which before were congealed in admiration, now relaxed into gaiety and good-humour. We had designed to pay our respects to the presiding goddess, but she was nowhere to be found. One of our companions asserted that her temple lay to the right; another, to the left; a third insisted that it was straight before us, and a fourth that we had left it behind. In short we found everything familiar and charming, but could not determine where to seek for the Grace in person.

In this agreeable incertitude we passed several hours, and, though very desirous of finding the goddess, by no means impatient of the delay. Every part of the valley presented some minute beauty, which, without offering itself, at once stole upon the soul, and captivated us with the charms of our retreat. Still, however, we continued to search, and might still have continued, had we not been interrupted by a voice which, though we could not see from whence it came, addressed us in this manner:

“ If you would find the goddess of Grace seek her not under one form, for she assumes a thousand. Ever changing under the eye of inspection, her variety, rather than her figure, is pleasing. In contemplating her beauty the eye glides over every

perfection with giddy delight, and, capable of fixing nowhere, is charmed with the whole.¹ She is now Contemplation with solemn look, again Compassion with humid eye; she now sparkles with joy, soon every feature speaks distress; her looks at times invite our approach, at others repress our presumption; the goddess cannot be properly called beautiful under any one of these forms, but by combining them all she becomes irresistible." Adieu.

¹ *Vultus nimium lubricus aspici.*—HOR.—GOLDSMITH.

LETTER LXXVII

THE BEHAVIOUR OF A SHOPKEEPER AND HIS JOURNEYMAN

*From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, First President of the Cere-
monial Academy at Pekin, in China*

THE shops of London are as well furnished as those of Pekin. Those of London have a picture hung at their door,¹ informing the passengers what they have to sell, as those at Pekin have a board to assure the buyer that they have no intention to cheat him.²

I was this morning to buy silk for a nightcap. Immediately upon entering the mercer's shop,

¹ See Letter ii., Vol. IV., p. 16. The house or door signs of London were taken down in 1766.

² "By the side of each shop is suspended from on high a huge ornamental label of wood, varnished and gilded, on which are inscribed the particular calling of the tenant and the goods in which he deals. The inscriptions in the shops are sometimes amusing, and at the same time highly characteristic of the keenness and industry of the people as traders. We have seen the following: 'Goods genuine, prices true.' 'Trade circling like a wheel,' etc. 'Former customers have inspired caution—no credit given.' 'A small stream always flowing,' etc."—DAVIS's *Chinese*, vol. ii., p. 9.

the master and his two men, with wigs plastered with powder, appeared to ask my commands. They were certainly the civillest people alive; if I but looked, they flew to the place where I cast my eye; every motion of mine set them running round the whole shop for my satisfaction. I informed them that I wanted what was good, and they showed me not less than forty pieces, and each was better than the former, the prettiest pattern in nature, and the fittest in the world for night-caps. "My very good friend," said I to the mercer, you "must not pretend to instruct me in silks; I know these in particular to be no better than your mere flimsy bungees." "That may be," cried the mercer, who I afterwards found had never contradicted a man in his life; "I cannot pretend to say but they may; but I can assure you my Lady Trail has had a sacque from this piece this very morning." "But friend," said I, "though my lady has chosen a sacque from it, I see no necessity that I should wear it for a night-cap." "That may be," returned he again, "yet what becomes a pretty lady will at any time look well on a handsome gentleman." This short compliment was thrown in so very seasonably upon my ugly face that, even though I disliked the silk, I desired him to cut me off the pattern of a night-cap.

While this business was consigned to his journeyman, the master himself took down some pieces of silk still finer than any I had yet seen, and, spreading them before me, "There," cries he,

"there 's a beauty; my Lord Snakeskin has bespoke the fellow to this for the birth-night this very morning; it would look charmingly in waistcoats." "But I do not want a waistcoat," replied I. "Not want a waistcoat," returned the mercer, "then I would advise you to buy one; when waistcoats are wanted, you may depend upon it they will come dear. Always buy before you want, and you are sure to be well used, as they say in Cheapside." There was so much justice in his advice that I could not refuse taking it; besides, the silk, which was really a good one, increased the temptation; so I gave orders for that too.

As I was waiting to have my bargains measured and cut, which, I know not how, they executed but slowly, during the interval the mercer entertained me with the modern manner of some of the nobility receiving company in their morning gowns. "Perhaps, Sir," adds he, "you have a mind to see what kind of silk is universally worn." Without waiting for my reply, he spreads a piece before me, which might be reckoned beautiful even in China. "If the nobility," continues he, "were to know that I sold this to any under a Right Honourable, I should certainly lose their custom; you see, my Lord, it is at once rich, tasty, and quite the thing." "I am no lord," interrupted I. "I beg pardon," cried he, "but be pleased to remember, when you intend buying a morning gown, that you had an offer from me of something

worth money. Conscience, Sir, conscience is my way of dealing; you may buy a morning gown now, or you may stay till they become dearer and less fashionable; but it is not my business to advise." In short, most reverend Fum, he persuaded me to buy a morning gown also, and would probably have persuaded me to have bought half the goods in his shop if I had stayed long enough, or was furnished with sufficient money.

Upon returning home, I could not help reflecting with some astonishment how this very man, with such a confined education and capacity, was yet capable of turning me as he thought proper and moulding me to his inclinations. I knew he was only answering his own purposes, even while he attempted to appear solicitous about mine; yet, by a voluntary infatuation, a sort of passion, compounded of vanity and good-nature, I walked into the snare with my eyes open, and put myself to future pain in order to give him immediate pleasure. The wisdom of the ignorant somewhat resembles the instinct of animals; it is diffused in but a very narrow sphere, but within that circle it acts with vigour, uniformity, and success. Adieu.

LETTER LXXVIII

THE FRENCH RIDICULED AFTER THEIR OWN MANNER

From the Same

FROM my former accounts you may be apt to fancy the English the most ridiculous people under the sun. They are indeed ridiculous; yet every other nation in Europe is equally so; each laughs at each, and the Asiatic at all.

I may upon another occasion point out what is most strikingly absurd in other countries; I shall at present confine myself only to France. The first national peculiarity a traveller meets upon entering that kingdom is an odd sort of a staring vivacity in every eye, not excepting even the children; the people, it seems, have got into their heads that they have more wit than others, and so stare in order to look smart.

I know not how it happens, but there appears a sickly delicacy in the faces of their finest women. This may have introduced the use of paint, and paint produces wrinkles; so that a fine lady shall look like an hag at twenty-three. But, as in some

measure they never appear young, so it may be equally asserted that they actually think themselves never old; a gentle miss shall prepare for new conquests at sixty, shall hobble a rigadoon when she can scarce walk out without a crutch; she shall affect the girl, play her fan and her eyes, and talk of sentiments, bleeding hearts, and expiring for love, when actually dying with age. Like a departing philosopher, she attempts to make her last moments the most brilliant of her life.

Their civility to strangers is what they are chiefly proud of; and, to confess sincerely, their beggars are the very politest beggars I ever knew. In other places a traveller is addressed with a piteous whine or a sturdy solemnity, but a French beggar shall ask your charity with a very genteel bow, and thank you for it with a smile and a shrug.

Another instance of this people's breeding I must not forget. An Englishman would not speak his native language in a company of foreigners, where he was sure that none understood him; a travelling Hottentot himself would be silent if acquainted only with the language of his country; but a Frenchman shall talk to you whether you understand his language or not; never troubling his head whether you have learned French, still he keeps up the conversation, fixes his eye full in your face, and asks a thousand questions, which he answers himself, for want of a more satisfactory reply.

But their civility to foreigners is not half so

great as their admiration of themselves. Everything that belongs to them and their nation is great, magnificent beyond expression, quite romantic! every garden is a paradise, every hovel a palace, and every woman an angel. They shut their eyes close, throw their mouths wide open, and cry out in rapture: "*Sacre!* what beauty! *O Ciel!* what taste! *mort de ma vie!* what grandeur! was ever any people like ourselves! we are the nation of men, and all the rest no better than two-legged barbarians."

I fancy the French would make the best cooks in the world, if they had but meat; as it is they can dress you out five different dishes from a nettle top, seven from a dock leaf, and twice as many from a frog's haunches; these eat prettily enough when one is a little used to them, are easy of digestion, and seldom overload the stomach with crudities. They seldom dine under seven hot dishes. It is true, indeed, with all this magnificence, they seldom spread a cloth before the guests; but in that I cannot be angry with them, since those who have no linen on their backs may very well be excused for wanting it upon their tables.

Even religion itself loses its solemnity among them. Upon their roads, at about every five miles' distance, you see an image of the Virgin Mary, dressed up in grim head-cloths, painted cheeks, and an old red petticoat; before her a lamp is often kept burning, at which, with the saint's permission, I have frequently lighted my

pipe. Instead of the Virgin, you are sometimes presented with a crucifix, at other times with a wooden Saviour, fitted out in complete garniture, with sponge, spear, nails, pincers, hammer, bees-wax, and vinegar-bottle. Some of those images, I have been told, came down from heaven; if so, in heaven they have but bungling workmen.

In passing through their towns you frequently see the men sitting at the doors knitting stockings while the care of cultivating the ground and pruning the vines fall to the women. This is, perhaps, the reason why the fair sex are granted some peculiar privileges in this country; particularly, when they can get horses, of riding without a side-saddle.

But I begin to think you may find this description pert and dull enough; perhaps it is so, yet in general it is the manner in which the French usually describe foreigners; and it is but just to force a part of that ridicule back upon them which they attempt to lavish on others. Adieu.

LETTER LXXIX

THE PREPARATIONS OF BOTH THEATRES FOR A WINTER CAMPAIGN

From the Same

THE two theatres¹ which serve to amuse the citizens here are again opened for the winter.

The mimetic troops, different from those of the state, begin their campaign when all the others quit the field; and, at a time when the Europeans cease to destroy each other in reality, they are entertained with mock battles upon the stage.

The dancing-master once more shakes his quivering feet; the carpenter prepares his paradise of pasteboard; the hero resolves to cover his forehead with brass, and the heroine begins to scour her copper tail, preparative to future operations; in short, all are in motion, from the theatrical letter-carrier in yellow clothes to Alexander the Great that stands on a stool.

¹ Drury Lane, of which Garrick was the manager and lessee, and Covent Garden, of which Rich, represented by Beard the singer, was the manager and lessee.

Both houses have already commenced hostilities. War, open war, and no quarter, received or given! Two singing women,¹ like heralds, have begun the contest: the whole town is divided on this solemn occasion; one has the finest pipe, the other the finest manner; one curtsies to the ground, the other salutes the audience with a smile; one comes on with modesty which asks, the other with boldness which extorts applause; one wears powder, the other has none; one has the longest waist, but the other appears most easy; all, all is important and serious; the town as yet perseveres in its neutrality; a cause of such moment demands the most mature deliberation; they continue to exhibit, and it is very possible this contest may continue to please to the end of the season.

But the generals of either army, have, as I am told, several reinforcements to lend occasional assistance. If they produce a pair of diamond

¹ Miss Brent and Mrs. Vincent. Mrs. Vincent made her first appearance (on any stage) at Drury Lane, 23d Sept. 1760, as Polly, in the *Beggar's Opera*. Miss Brent (a scholar of Dr. Arne's) made her first appearance at Covent Garden, as Polly, in the same play, on the 10th Oct., 1759; and was so successful that she carried all before her.—See Essay v. of *Unacknowledged Essays*, in Vol. VII.

“Lo! *Vincent* comes—with simple grace arrayed,
 She laughs at paltry arts, and scorns parade.
 Nature through her is by reflection shown,
 Whilst Gay once more knows Polly for his own.
 Talk not to me of diffidence and fear—
 I see it all, but must forgive it here.
 Defects like these which modest terrors cause,
 From impudence itself extort applause,
 Candour and reason still take virtue's part;
 We love e'en foibles in so good a heart.”

buckles at one house, we have a pair of eyebrows that can match them at the other. If we outdo them in our attitude, they can overcome us by a shrug; if we can bring more children on the stage, they can bring more guards in red clothes, who strut and shoulder their swords to the astonishment of every spectator.

They tell me here, that people frequent the theatre in order to be instructed as well as amused. I smile to hear the assertion. If I ever go to one of their play-houses, what with trumpets, hallooing behind the stage, and bawling upon it, I am quite dizzy before the performance is over. If I enter the house with any sentiments in my head I am sure to have none going away; the whole mind being filled with a dead march, a funeral procession, a cat-call, a jig, or a tempest.

There is, perhaps, nothing more easy than to write properly for the English theatre. I am

Let Tommy Arne, with usual pomp of style,
Whose chief, whose only merit 's to compile,

Publish proposals, laws for taste prescribe
And chaunt the praise of an Italian tribe;
Let him reverse kind Nature's first decrees,
And teach e'en *Brent* a method not to please;
But never shall a truly British stage
Bear a vile race of eunuchs on the stage,
The boasted work 's called national in vain,
If one Italian voice pollutes the strain.
Where tyrants rule, and slaves with joy obey,
Let slavish minstrels pour th' enervate lay,
To Britons far more noble pleasures spring,
In native notes whilst Beard and Vincent sing."

CHURCHILL—*The Rosciad*.

amazed that none are apprenticed to the trade. The author, when well acquainted with the value of thunder and lightning, when versed in all the mystery of scene-shifting and trap-doors; when skilled in the proper periods to introduce a wire-walker, or a water-fall; when instructed in every actor's peculiar talent, and capable of adapting his speeches to the supposed excellence; when thus instructed, he knows all that can give a modern audience pleasure. One player shines in an exclamation, another in a groan, a third in a horror, a fourth in a start, a fifth in a smile, a sixth faints, and a seventh fidgets round the stage, with peculiar vivacity; that piece, therefore, will succeed best, where each has a proper opportunity of shining: the actor's business is not so much to adapt himself to the poet, as the poet's to adapt himself to the actor.

The great secret therefore of tragedy-writing at present is a perfect acquaintance with theatrical ah's and oh's; a certain number of these, interspersed with gods! tortures! rack! and damnation! shall distort every actor almost into convulsions, and draw tears from every spectator; a proper use of these will infallibly fill the whole house with applause. But, above all, a whining scene must strike most forcibly. I would advise, from my present knowledge of the audience, the two favourite players of the town to introduce a scene of this sort in every play. Towards the middle of the last act, I would have them enter with wild

looks and outspread arms; there is no necessity for speaking, they are only to groan at each other, they must vary the tones of exclamation and despair through the whole theatrical gamut, wring their figures into every shape of distress, and when their calamities have drawn a proper quantity of tears from the sympathetic spectators, they may go in dumb solemnity at different doors, clasping their hands, or slapping their pocket-holes—this, which may be called a tragic pantomime, will answer every purpose of moving the passions as well as words could have done and it must save those expenses which go to reward an author.

All modern plays that would keep the audience alive must be conceived in this manner; and indeed, many a modern play is made up on no other plan. This is the merit that lifts up the heart, like opium, into a rapture of insensibility, and can dismiss the mind from all the fatigue of thinking; this is the eloquence that shines in many a long-forgotten scene, which has been reckoned excessively fine upon acting; this the lightning that flashes no less in the hyperbolical tyrant, “who breakfasts on the wind,” than in little Norval, “as harmless as the babe unborn.” Adieu.

LETTER LXXX

THE EVIL TENDENCY OF INCREASING PENAL LAWS,
OR ENFORCING EVEN THOSE ALREADY IN BE-
ING WITH RIGOUR

From the Same

I HAVE always regarded the spirit of mercy which appears in the Chinese laws with admiration.¹ An order for the execution of a criminal is carried from court by slow journeys of six miles a day, but a pardon is sent down with the most rapid dispatch. If five sons of the same father be guilty of the same offence, one of them is forgiven, in order to continue the family, and comfort his aged parents in their decline.

¹ "The most remarkable thing in the Chinese code is its great reasonableness, clearness, and consistency; the business-like brevity and directness of the various provisions, and the plainness and moderation of the language in which they are expressed. There is nothing here of the monstrous *verbiage* of most other Asiatic productions; none of the superstitious delirium, the miserable incoherence, the tremendous *non-sequiturs* and eternal repetitions of those oracular performances; but a clear, concise, and distinct series of enactments, savouring throughout of practical judgment and European good sense, and if not always conformable to our improved notions of expediency in this country, in general

Similar to this, there is a spirit of mercy breathes through the laws of England, which some erroneously endeavour to suppress; the laws, however, seem unwilling to punish the offender, or to furnish the officers of justice with every means of acting with severity. Those who arrest debtors are denied the use of arms; the nightly watch is permitted to repress the disorders of the drunken citizens only with clubs; justice, in such a case, seems to hide her terrors, and permits some offenders to escape rather than load any with a punishment disproportioned to the crime.

Thus it is the glory of an Englishman, that he is not only governed by laws, but that these are also tempered by mercy: a country restrained by severe laws, and those too executed with severity (as in Japan),¹ is under the most terrible species

approaching to them more nearly than the codes of most other nations."—*Edinburgh Review*, vol. xvi. p. 481: critique on Sir George Staunton's *Leu Lee*, or penal code of the Chinese.

"The edition of the penal code of China circulated in a cheap form for the benefit of the public, is so concisely framed as to be comprehended in little more space than is occupied by one of our statutes. Indeed, the whole code does not contain two thousand different characters or words; so studious have the legislators of China been to simplify and adapt it to common capacities."—*Quarterly Review*, No. cxii., p. 504 (1836).

¹ "I have often wondered at the laconic style of those tablets which are hung up on the roads to notify the emperor's pleasure. There is no reason given how it came about that such a law was made; no mention of the lawgiver's view and intention; nor any graduated penalty put upon the violation thereof. The bare transgression of the law is capital, without any regard to the degree or heinousness of the crime, or the favourable circumstances the offender's case may be accompanied with."—KÄMPFER, *History of Japan*, 2 vols. folio, 1727.

of tyranny; a royal tyrant is generally dreadful to the great, but numerous penal laws grind every rank of people. and chiefly those least able to resist oppression, the poor.

It is very possible thus for a people to become slaves to laws of their own enacting, as the Athenians were to those of Draco. "It might first happen," says the historian, "that men with peculiar talents for villainy attempted to evade the ordinances already established; their practices, therefore, soon brought on a new law levelled against them: but the same degree of cunning which had taught the knave to evade the former statutes, taught him to evade the latter also; he flew to new shifts, while justice pursued with new ordinances, still, however, he kept his proper distance, and whenever one crime was judged penal by the state, he left committing it, in order to practice some unforbidden species of villainy. Thus the criminal against whom the threatenings were denounced always escaped free: while the simple rogue alone felt the rigour of justice. In the mean time, penal laws became numerous; almost every person in the state, unknowingly, at different times offended, and was every moment subject to a malicious prosecution." In fact, penal laws, instead of preventing crimes, are generally enacted after the commission; instead of repressing the growth of ingenious villainy, only multiply deceit, by putting it upon new shifts and expedients of practising it with impunity.

Such laws, therefore, resemble the guards which are sometimes imposed upon tributary princes, apparently indeed to secure them from danger, but in reality to confirm their captivity.

Penal laws, it must be allowed, secure property in a state, but they also diminish personal security in the same proportion: there is no positive law, how equitable soever, that may not be sometimes capable of injustice. When a law enacted to make theft punishable with death happens to be equitably executed, it can at best only guard our possessions; but when, by favour or ignorance, justice pronounces a wrong verdict, it then attacks our lives, since, in such a case, the whole community suffers with the innocent victim: if, therefore, in order to secure the effects of one man, I should make a law which may take away the life of another, in such a case, to attain smaller good, I am guilty of a greater evil; to secure society in the possession of a bauble, I render a real and valuable possession precarious. And indeed the experience of every age may serve to vindicate the assertion: no law could be more just than that called *lesæ majestatis*, when Rome was governed by emperors. It was but reasonable, that every conspiracy against the administration should be detected and punished; yet what terrible slaughters succeeded in consequence of its enacting! proscriptions, stranglings, poisonings, in almost every family of distinction; yet all done in a legal

way, every criminal had his trial, and lost his life by a majority of witnesses.

And such will ever be the case, where punishments are numerous, and where a weak, vicious, but above all, where a mercenary magistrate is concerned in their execution: such a man desires to see penal laws increased, since he too frequently has it in his power to turn them into instruments of extortion: in such hands, the more laws the wider means, not of satisfying justice, but of satiating avarice.

A mercenary magistrate, who is rewarded in proportion, not to his integrity, but to the number he convicts, must be a person of the most unblemished character, or he will lean on the side of cruelty; and when once the work of injustice is begun, it is impossible to tell how far it will proceed. It is said of the hyæna, that, naturally, it is no way ravenous, but when once it has tasted human flesh, it becomes the most voracious animal of the forest, and continues to persecute mankind ever after. A corrupt magistrate may be considered as a human hyæna; he begins, perhaps, by a private snap, he goes on to a morsel among friends, he proceeds to a meal in public, from a meal he advances to a surfeit, and at last sucks blood like a vampire.

Not into such hands should the administration of justice be entrusted, but to those who know how to reward as well as to punish. It was a fine saying of Nangfu the emperor, who, being

told that his enemies had raised an insurrection in one of the distant provinces, "Come then, my friend," said he, "follow me, and I promise you that we shall quickly destroy them." He marched forward, and the rebels submitted upon his approach. All now thought that he would take the most signal revenge, but were surprised to see the captives treated with mildness and humanity. "How!" cries his first minister, "is this the manner in which you fulfil your promise? your royal word was given that your enemies should be destroyed, and behold you have pardoned all, and even caressed some!"—"I promised," replied the emperor, with a generous air, "to *destroy* my enemies; I have fulfilled my word, for see they are enemies no longer—I have made *friends* of them."

This, could it always succeed, were the true method of destroying the enemies of a state. Well, it were, if rewards and mercy alone could regulate the commonwealth; but since punishments are sometimes necessary, let them at least be rendered terrible, by being executed but seldom, and let Justice lift her sword rather to terrify than revenge. Adieu.

LETTER LXXXI

THE LADIES' TRAINS RIDICULED

From the Same

I HAVE as yet given you but a short and imperfect description of the ladies of England.

Woman, my friend, is a subject not easily understood, even in China; what, therefore, can be expected from my knowledge of the sex, in a country where they are universally allowed to be riddles, and I but a stranger?

To confess a truth, I was afraid to begin the description, lest the sex should undergo some new revolution before it was finished, and my picture should thus become old before it could well be said to have ever been new. To-day they are lifted upon stilts, to-morrow they lower their heels and raise their heads; their clothes at one time are bloated out with whalebone; at present they have laid their hoops aside, and are become as slim as mermaids.¹ All, all is in a

¹ "The Chinese, perhaps, may be said to possess an advantage, in the absence of those perpetual and frequently absurd mutations

state of continual fluctuation, from the mandarin's wife, who rattles through the streets in her chariot, to the humble sempstress, who clatters over the pavement in iron-shod pattens.

What chiefly distinguishes the sex at present is the train. As a lady's quality or fashion was once determined here by the circumference of her hoop, both are now measured by the length of her tail. Women of moderate fortunes are contented with tails moderately long; but ladies of true taste and distinction set no bounds to their ambition in this particular. I am told the Lady Mayoress, on days of ceremony, carries one longer than a bell-wether of Bantam, whose tail you know is trundled along in a wheelbarrow.

Sun of China, what contradictions do we find in this strange world! Not only the people of different countries think in opposition to each other, but the inhabitants of a single island are often found inconsistent with themselves. Would you believe it? this very people, my Fum, who are so fond of seeing their women with long tails, at the same time dock their horses to the very rump!

But you may easily guess that I am no ways

of fashion in Europe, which at one period blow out the same individual like a balloon, whom at another they contract into a mummy. They are not at the mercy and disposal, in matters of taste, of those who make their clothes. and their modes generally last as long as their garments. The only setter of fashions is the board of rites and ceremonies at Pekin, and to depart materially from their ordinances would be considered as something worse than mere *mauvais ton*."—DAVIS'S *Chinese*, vol. i., p. 352.

displeased with a fashion which tends to increase a demand for the commodities of the East, and is so very beneficial to the country in which I was born. Nothing can be better calculated to increase the price of silk than the present manner of dressing. A lady's train is not bought but at some expense, and after it has swept the public walks for a very few evenings is fit to be worn no longer: more silk must be bought in order to repair the breach, and some ladies of peculiar economy are thus found to patch up their tails eight or ten times a season. This unnecessary consumption may introduce poverty here, but then we shall be the richer for it in China.

The Man in Black, who is a professed enemy to this manner of ornamenting the tail, assures me there are numberless inconveniences attending it, and that a lady dressed up to the fashion is as much a cripple as any in Nankin. But his chief indignation is levelled at those who dress in this manner without a proper fortune to support it. He assures me that he has known some who would have a tail though they wanted a petticoat, and others who, without any other pretensions, fancied they became ladies merely from the addition of three superfluous yards of ragged silk. "I know a thrifty good woman," continues he, "who, thinking herself obliged to carry a train like her betters, never walks from home without the uneasy apprehensions of wearing it out too soon; every excursion she makes gives her new anxiety, and her train

is every bit as importunate, and wounds her peace as much, as the bladder we sometimes see tied to the tail of a cat."

Nay, he ventures to affirm that a train may often bring a lady into the most critical circumstances; for should a rude fellow, says, he, offer to come up to ravish a kiss, and the lady attempt to avoid it, in retiring she must necessarily tread upon her train, and thus fall fairly upon her back, by which means every one knows,—her clothes may be spoiled.

The ladies here make no scruple to laugh at the smallness of a Chinese slipper, but I fancy our wives at China would have more real cause of laughter could they but see the immoderate length of an European train. Head of Confucius! to view a human being crippling herself with a great unwieldy tail for our diversion; backward she cannot go, forward she must move but slowly, and if ever she attempts to turn round, it must be in a circle not smaller than that described by the wheeling crocodile, when it would face an assailant. And yet, to think that all this confers importance and majesty! to think that a lady acquires additional respect from fifteen yards of trailing taffeta! I can't contain: ha! ha! ha! This is certainly a remnant of European barbarity; the female Tartar, dressed in sheep-skins, is in far more convenient drapery. Their own wrifers have sometimes inveighed against the absurdity of this fashion, but perhaps it has never

been ridiculed so well as upon the Italian theatre, where Pasquariello, being engaged to attend on countess of Fernambroco, having one of his hands employed in carrying her muff, and the other her lap-dog, he bears her train majestically along, by sticking it in the waistband of his breeches. Adieu.

LETTER LXXXII

THE SCIENCES USEFUL IN A POPULOUS STATE, PRE-
JUDICIAL IN A BARBAROUS ONE

From the Same

A DISPUTE has for some time divided the philosophers of Europe: it is debated whether arts and sciences are more serviceable or prejudicial to mankind. They who maintain the cause of literature endeavour to prove their usefulness, from the impossibility of a large number of men subsisting in a small tract of country without them; from the pleasure which attends the acquisition; and from the influence of knowledge in promoting practical morality.

They who maintain the opposite opinion display the happiness and innocence of those uncultivated nations who live without learning; urge the numerous vices which are to be found only in polished society; enlarge upon the oppression, the cruelty, and the blood which must necessarily be shed, in order to cement civil society; and insist upon the happy equality of conditions in a

barbarous state, preferable to the unnatural subordination of a more refined constitution.

This dispute, which has already given so much employment to speculative indolence, has been managed with much ardour, and (not to suppress our sentiments) with but little sagacity. They who insist that the sciences are useful in refined society are certainly right, and they who maintain that barbarous nations are more happy without them are right also; but when one side, for this reason, attempts to prove them as universally useful to the solitary barbarian as to the native of a crowded commonwealth, or when the other endeavours to banish them as prejudicial to all society, even from populous states as well as from the inhabitants of the wilderness, they are both wrong; since that knowledge which makes the happiness of a refined European would be a torment to the precarious tenant of an Asiatic wild.

Let me, to prove this, transport the imagination for a moment to the midst of a forest in Siberia. There we behold the inhabitant, poor indeed, but equally fond of happiness with the most refined philosopher of China. The earth lies uncultivated and uninhabited for miles around him; his little family and he the sole and undisputed possessors. In such circumstances, nature and reason will induce him to prefer a hunter's life to that manner of living which is carried on at the smallest expense of labour, and that food which is most agreeable to the appetite; he will prefer indolent

though precarious luxury to a laborious though permanent competence; and a knowledge of his own happiness will determine him to persevere in native barbarity.

In like manner, his happiness will incline him to bind himself by no law. Laws are made in order to secure present property; but he is possessed of no property which he is afraid to lose, and he desires no more that will be sufficient to sustain him; to enter into compacts with others would be undergoing a voluntary obligation without the expectance of any reward. He and his countrymen are tenants, not rivals, in the same inexhaustible forest; the increased possessions of one by no means diminishes the expectations arising from equal assiduity in another; there are no need of laws, therefore, to repress ambition, where there can be no mischief attending its most boundless gratifications.

Our solitary Siberian will, in like manner, find the sciences not only entirely useless in directing his practice, but disgusting even in speculation. In every contemplation, our curiosity must be first excited by the appearances of things, before our reason undergoes the fatigue of investigating the causes. Some of those appearances are produced by experiment, others by minute enquiry; some arise from a knowledge of foreign climates, and others from an intimate study of our own. But there are few objects in comparison which present themselves to the inhabitant of a bar-

barous country: the game he hunts, or the transient cottage he builds, make up the chief objects of his concern; his curiosity, therefore, must be proportionably less, and if that is diminished the reasoning faculty will be diminished in proportion.

Besides, sensual enjoyment adds wings to curiosity. We consider few objects with ardent attention but those which have some connexion with our wishes, our pleasures, or our necessities. A desire of enjoyment first interests our passions in the pursuit, points out the object of investigation, and reason then comments where sense has led the way. An increase in the number of our enjoyments, therefore, necessarily produces an increase of scientific research; but in countries where almost every enjoyment is wanting, reason there seems destitute of its great inspirer, and speculation is the business of fools when it becomes its own reward.

The barbarous Siberian is too wise, therefore, to exhaust his time in quest of knowledge which neither curiosity prompts, nor pleasure impels him to pursue. When told of the exact admeasurement of a degree upon the equator at Quito, he feels no pleasure in the account; when informed that such a discovery tends to promote navigation and commerce, he finds himself no way interested in either. A discovery which some have pursued at the hazard of their lives affects him with neither astonishment nor pleasure. He is satisfied with thoroughly understanding the few

objects which contribute to his own felicity: he knows the properest places where to lay the snare for the sable, and discerns the value of furs with more than European sagacity. More extended knowledge would only serve to render him unhappy; it might lend a ray to show him the misery of his situation, but could not guide him in his efforts to avoid it. Ignorance is the happiness of the poor.

The misery of a being endowed with sentiments above its capacity of fruition is most admirably described in one of the fables of Lokman,¹ the Indian moralist: "An elephant that had been peculiarly serviceable in fighting the battles of Wistnow was ordered by the god to wish for whatever he thought proper, and the desire should be attended with immediate gratification. The elephant thanked his benefactor on bended knees, and desired to be endowed with the reason and the faculties of a man. Wistnow was sorry to hear the foolish request, and endeavoured to dissuade him from his misplaced ambition; but finding it to no purpose, gave him at last such a portion of wisdom, as could correct even the Zend-Avesta of

¹ An Abyssinian philosopher of high repute among the Eastern nations. Mahomet has given his name to a chapter of the Koran in which he introduces God as saying, "I have bestowed wisdom on Lokman." Many of his apothegms are scattered in the writings of the Orientals: an entertaining selection from which will be found in D'Herbelot. The reliques of his fables were published (1636) at Leyden, in Arabic and Latin, and translated (1714) into French by Galland, at Paris, and more recently (1799) by Marcel.

Zoroaster. The reasoning elephant went away rejoicing in his new acquisition; and, though his body still retained its ancient form, he found his appetites and passions entirely altered. He first considered that it would not only be more comfortable, but also more becoming, to wear clothes; but, unhappily, he had no method of making them himself, nor had he the use of speech to demand them from others; and this was the first time he felt real anxiety. He soon perceived how much more elegantly men were fed than he; therefore he began to loathe his usual food, and longed for those delicacies which adorn the tables of princes; but here again he found it impossible to be satisfied, for, though he could easily obtain flesh, yet he found it impossible to dress it in any degree of perfection. In short, every pleasure that contributed to the felicity of mankind served only to render him more miserable, as he found himself utterly deprived of the power of enjoyment. In this manner he led a repining, discontented life, detesting himself, and displeased with his ill-judged ambition; till at last his benefactor, Wistnow, taking compassion on his forlorn situation, restored him to ignorance and the happiness which he was originally formed to enjoy."

No, my friend, to attempt to introduce the sciences into a nation of wandering barbarians is only to render them more miserable than even nature designed they should be. A life of simplicity is best fitted to a state of solitude.

The great law-giver of Russia attempted to improve the desolate inhabitants of Siberia, by sending among them some of the politest men of Europe. The consequence has shown that the country was as yet unfit to receive them: they languished for a time with a sort of exotic malady; every day degenerated from themselves, and at last, instead of rendering the country more polite, they conformed to the soil, and put on barbarity.

No, my friend, in order to make the sciences useful in any country, it must first become populous; the inhabitant must go through the different stages of hunter, shepherd, and husbandman; then, when property becomes valuable, and consequently gives cause for injustice; then, when laws are appointed to redress injury and secure possession; when men, by the sanction of those laws, become possessed of superfluity; when luxury is thus introduced, and demands its continual supply, then it is that the sciences become necessary and useful; the state then cannot subsist without them; they must be introduced at once, to teach men to draw the greatest possible quantity of pleasure from circumscribed possession, and to restrain them within the bounds of moderate enjoyment.

The sciences are not the cause of luxury, but its consequence; and this destroyer thus brings with it an antidote which resists the virulence of its own poison. By asserting that luxury intro-

duces the sciences we assert a truth; but if, with those who reject the utility of learning, we assert that the sciences also introduce luxury, we shall be at once false, absurd, and ridiculous. Adieu.

LETTER LXXXIII

SOME CAUTIONS ON LIFE, TAKEN FROM A MODERN PHILOSOPHER OF CHINA

From Lien Chi Altangi to Hingpo, by the way of Moscow

YOU are now arrived at an age, my son, when pleasure dissuades from application; but rob not, by present gratification, all the succeeding period of life of its happiness. Sacrifice a little pleasure at first to the expectance of greater. The study of a few years will make the rest of life completely easy.

But instead of continuing the subject myself, take the following instruction borrowed from a modern philosopher of China:¹ "He who has begun his fortune by study will certainly confirm it by perseverance. The love of books damps the passion for pleasure; and when this passion is once extinguished, life is then cheaply supported:

¹ A translation of this passage may also be seen in Du Halde, vol. ii., fol. ed., pp. 47 and 58. This extract will at least serve to show that fondness for humour which appears in the writings of the Chinese.—GOLDSMITH.

thus a man, being possessed of more than he wants, can never be subject to great disappointments, and avoids all those meannesses which indigence sometimes unavoidably produces.

“There is unspeakable pleasure attending the life of a voluntary student. The first time I read an excellent book, it is to me just as if I had gained a new friend. When I read over a book I have perused before, it resembles the meeting with an old one. We ought to lay hold of every incident in life for improvement, the trifling as well as the important. It is not one diamond alone which gives lustre to another; a common coarse stone is also employed for that purpose. Thus I ought to draw advantage from the insults and contempt I meet with from a worthless fellow. His brutality ought to induce me to self-examination, and correct every blemish that may have given rise to his calumny.

“Yet, with all the pleasures and profits which are generally produced by learning, parents often find it difficult to induce their children to study. They often seem dragged to what wears the appearance of application. Thus, being dilatory in the beginning, all future hopes of eminence are entirely cut off. If they find themselves obliged to write two lines more polite than ordinary, their pencil then seems as heavy as a mill-stone, and they spend ten years in turning two or three periods with propriety.

“These persons are most at a loss when a ban-

quet is almost over ; the plate and the dice go round, that the number of little verses, which each is obliged to repeat, may be determined by chance. The booby, when it comes to his turn, appears quite stupid and insensible. The company divert themselves with his confusion; and sneers, winks, and whispers are circulated at his expense. As for him, he opens a pair of large heavy eyes, stares at all about him, and even offers to join in the laugh, without ever considering himself as the burthen of all their good-humour.

“But it is of no importance to read much, except you be regular in your reading. If it be interrupted for any considerable time, it can never be attended with proper improvement. There are some who study for one day with intense application, and repose themselves for ten days after. But wisdom is a coquette, and must be courted with unabating assiduity.

“It was a saying of the ancients, that a man never opens a book without reaping some advantage by it. I say, with them, that every book can serve to make us more expert, except romances,¹ and these are no better than the

¹ “Above all things let him [his brother's son] never touch a romance or novel; these paint beauty in colours more charming than nature, and describe happiness that man never tastes. How delusive, how destructive, are those pictures of consummate bliss! They teach the youthful mind to sigh after beauty and happiness which never existed; to despise the little good which fortune has mixed in our cup, by expecting more than she ever gave.”—GOLD-SMITH *to his Brother*, *circa*, Feb. 1759.

instruments of debauchery. They are dangerous fictions, where love is the ruling passion.

“The most indecent strokes there pass for turns of wit; intrigue and criminal liberties for gallantry and politeness. Assignations, and even villainy, are put in such strong lights as may inspire even grown men with the strongest passion; how much more, therefore, ought the youth of either sex to dread them, whose reason is so weak, and whose hearts are so susceptible of passion!

“To slip in by a back door, or leap a wall, are accomplishments that, when handsomely set off, enchant a young heart. It is true, the plot is commonly wound up by a marriage, concluded with the consent of parents, and adjusted by every ceremony prescribed by law. But as in the body of the work there are many passages that offend good morals, overthrow laudable customs, violate the laws, and destroy the duties most essential to society, virtue is thereby exposed to the most dangerous attacks.

“But, say some, the authors of these romances have nothing in view but to represent vice punished and virtue rewarded. Granted. But will the greater number of readers take notice of these punishments and rewards? Are not their minds carried to something else? Can it be imagined that the heart with which the author inspires the love of virtue, can overcome that crowd of thoughts which sway them to licentiousness? To be able to inculcate virtue by so leaky a vehicle, the author

must be a philosopher of the first rank. But in our age, we can find but few first-rate philosophers.

“Avoid such performances where vice assumes the face of virtue; seek wisdom and knowledge without ever thinking you have found them. A man is wise while he continues in the pursuit of wisdom; but when he once fancies that he has found the object of his enquiry, he then becomes a fool. Learn to pursue virtue from the man that is blind, who never makes a step without first examining the ground with his staff.

“The world is a vast sea; mankind like a vessel sailing on its tempestuous bosom. Our prudence is its sails, the sciences serve us for oars, good or bad fortune are the favourable or contrary winds, and judgment is the rudder; without this last, the vessel is tossed by every billow, and will find shipwreck in every breeze. In a word, obscurity and indigence are the parents of vigilance and economy; vigilance and economy of riches and honour; riches and honour of pride and luxury; pride and luxury of impurity and idleness; and impurity and idleness again produce indigence and obscurity. Such are the revolutions of life.” Adieu.

LETTER LXXXIV

THE ANECDOTES OF SEVERAL POETS, WHO LIVED
AND DIED IN CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRETCHED-
NESS

*From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first president of the Cere-
monial Academy at Pekin, in China*

I FANCY the character of a poet is in every country the same: fond of enjoying the present, careless of the future; his conversation that of a man of sense, his actions those of a fool; of fortitude able to stand unmoved at the bursting of an earthquake, yet of sensibility to be affected by the breaking of a teacup;—such is his character, which, considered in every light, is the very opposite of that which leads to riches.¹

The poets of the West are as remarkable for their indigence as their genius, and yet among the numerous hospitals designed to relieve the poor I have heard of but one erected for the benefit of decayed authors. This was founded by Pope Urban the Eighth, and called the retreat of the

¹ A sketch drawn, no doubt, from Goldsmith's own character, and certainly with strong points of resemblance.

incurables, intimating that it was equally impossible to reclaim the patients, who sued for reception, from poverty or from poetry. To be sincere, were I to send you an account of the lives of the Western poets, either ancient or modern, I fancy you would think me employed in collecting materials for a history of human wretchedness.

Homer is the first poet and beggar of note among the ancients: he was blind, and sang his ballads about the streets; but it is observed that his mouth was more frequently filled with verses than with bread. Plautus the comic poet was better off; he had two trades—he was a poet for his diversion, and helped to turn a mill in order to gain a livelihood. Terence was a slave, and Boethius died in goal.¹

Among the Italians, Paulo Borghese, almost as good a poet as Tasso, knew fourteen different trades, and yet died because he could get employment in none. Tasso himself, who had the most amiable character of all poets, has often been obliged to borrow a crown from some friend, in order to pay for a month's subsistence; he has left us a pretty sonnet, addressed to his cat, in which he begs the light of her eyes to write by, being too poor to afford himself a candle. But

¹ Boethius was beheaded in prison at Pavia, in 526, by order of Theodore, king of the Goths. His work, *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*, written during his imprisonment, was translated into Anglo-Saxon by Alfred the Great, and into English by Queen Elizabeth. Dr. Johnson advised Miss Carter to undertake a version of it.

Bentivoglio, poor Bentivoglio! chiefly demands our pity. His comedies will last with the Italian language; he dissipated a noble fortune in acts of charity and benevolence; but, falling into misery in his old age, was refused to be admitted into an hospital which he himself had erected.

In Spain, it is said, the great Cervantes died of hunger; and it is certain that the famous Camoëns ended his days in an hospital.¹

If we turn to France, we shall there find even stronger instances of the ingratitude of the public. Vaugelas,² one of the politest writers, and one of the honestest men of his time, was surnamed the Owl, from his being obliged to keep within all day, and venture out only by night, through fear of his creditors. His last will is very remarkable. After having bequeathed all his worldly substance to the discharging his debts, he goes on thus: "but as there still may remain some creditors unpaid, even after all that I have shall have been disposed of, in such a case, it is my last will, that my body should be sold to the surgeons to the best advantage, and that the purchase should go to the discharging those debts which I owe to society; so that, if I could not while living, at least when dead, I may be useful."

Cassandre was one of the greatest geniuses of

¹ Camoëns died in an almshouse in 1579.

² Vaugelas was born at Chambéry in 1585, and died in Paris in 1650, aged sixty-five years; thirty of which he devoted to a translation of Quintus Curtius.

his time, yet all his merit could not procure him a bare subsistence.¹ Being by degrees driven into an hatred of all mankind, from the little pity he found amongst them, he even ventured at last ungratefully to impute his calamities to Providence. In his last agonies, when the priest entreated him to rely on the justice of Heaven, and ask mercy from Him that made him—"If God," replies he, "has shown me no justice here, what reason have I to expect any from Him hereafter?" But being answered that a suspension of justice was no argument that should induce us to doubt of its reality, "Let me entreat you," continued his confessor, "by all that is dear to be reconciled to God, your father, your maker, and friend." "No," replied the exasperated wretch, "you know the manner in which He left me to live; and,"—pointing to the straw on which he was stretched,— "you see the manner in which He leaves me to die!"

But the sufferings of the poet in other countries is nothing when compared to his distresses here; the names of Spenser and Otway, Butler and Dryden, are every day mentioned as a national reproach: some of them lived in a state of precarious indigence, and others literally died of hunger.

At present, the few poets of England no longer depend on the great for subsistence; they have

¹ François Cassandre, who translated Aristotle's *Rhetoric* into French, and died in 1695. was a man of very violent temper, and of imprudent conduct. He is thus described by Boileau:

"Je suis rustique et fier, et j'ai l'âme grossière."

now no other patrons but the public, and the public, collectively considered, is a good and generous master. It is, indeed, too frequently mistaken as to the merits of every candidate for favour; but, to make amends, it is never mistaken long. A performance indeed may be forced for a time into reputation, but, destitute of real merit, it soon sinks; time, the touchstone of what is truly valuable, will soon discover the fraud, and an author should never arrogate to himself any share of success till his works have been read at least ten years with satisfaction.

A man of letters at present, whose works are valuable, is perfectly sensible of their value. Every polite member of the community, by buying what he writes, contributes to reward him. The ridicule, therefore, of living in a garret might have been wit in the last age, but continues such no longer, because no longer true. A writer of real merit now may easily be rich, if his heart be set only on fortune; and for those who have no merit it is but fit that such should remain in merited obscurity. He may now refuse an invitation to dinner, without fearing to incur his patron's displeasure, or to starve by remaining at home. He may now venture to appear in company with just such clothes as other men generally wear, and talk even to princes with all the conscious superiority of wisdom. Though he cannot boast of fortune here, yet he can bravely assert the dignity of independence. Adieu.

LETTER LXXXV

THE TRIFLING SQUABBLES OF STAGE-PLAYERS RIDICULED

From the Same

I HAVE interested myself so long in all the concerns of this people that I am almost become an Englishman. I now begin to read with pleasure of their taking towns or gaining battles, and secretly wish disappointment to all the enemies of Britain. Yet still my regard to mankind fills me with concern for their contentions. I could wish to see the disturbances of Europe once more amicably adjusted. I am an enemy to nothing in this good world but war; I hate fighting between rival states; I hate it between man and man; I hate fighting even between women!

I already informed you that, while Europe was at variance, we were also threatened from the stage with an irreconcilable opposition, and that our singing women were resolved to sing at each other to the end of the season. O my friend, those fears were just! They are not only deter-

mined to sing at each other to the end of the season, but what is worse, to sing the same song; and what is still more unsupportable, to make us pay for hearing.

If they be for war, for my part, I should advise them to have a public congress, and there fairly squall at each other. What signifies sounding the trumpet of defiance at a distance, and calling in the town to fight their battles? I would have them come boldly into one of the most open and frequented streets, face to face, and there try their skill in quavering.

However this may be, resolved I am that they shall not touch one single piece of silver more of mine. Though I have ears for music, thanks be to heaven, they are not altogether ass's ears. What! Polly and the Pick-pocket to-night,¹ Polly and the Pick-pocket to-morrow night, and Polly and the Pick-pocket again! I want patience. I'll hear no more. My soul is out of tune; all jarring, discord, and confusion. Rest, rest, ye dear three clinking shillings in my pocket's bottom: the music you make is more harmonious to my spirit than catgut, rosin, or all the nightingales that ever chirruped in petticoats.

But what raises my indignation to the greatest degree is that this piping does not only pester me on the stage, but is my punishment in private conversation. What is it to me whether the

¹ *The Beggar's Opera.*

“fine pipe” of one, or the “great manner” of the other, be preferable? what care I if one has a better top, or the other a nobler bottom? how am I concerned if one sings from the stomach, or the other sings with a snap? Yet, paltry as these matters are, they make a subject of debate wherever I go; and this musical dispute, especially among the fair sex, almost always ends in a very unmusical altercation.

Sure the spirit of contention is mixed into the very constitution of the people! Divisions among the inhabitants of other countries arise only from their higher concerns, but subjects the most contemptible are made an affair of party here; the spirit is carried even into their amusements. The very ladies, whose duty should seem to allay the impetuosity of the opposite sex, become themselves party champions, engage in the thickest of the fight, scold at each other, and show their courage, even at the expense of their lovers and their beauty.

There are even a numerous set of poets who help to keep up the contention, and write for the stage. Mistake me not; I do not mean pieces to be acted upon it, but panegyrical verses on the performers; for that is the most universal method of writing for the stage at present. It is the business of the stage poet, therefore, to watch the appearance of every new player at his own house, and so come out next day with a flaunting copy of newspaper verses. In these, Nature and the

actor may be set to run races, the player always coming off victorious; or Nature may mistake him for herself; or old Shakespeare may put on his winding-sheet and pay him a visit; or the tune-ful nine may strike up their harps in his praise; or, should it happen to be an actress, Venus, the beauteous queen of love, and the naked Graces, are ever in waiting; the lady must be herself a goddess bred and born; she must—but you shall have a specimen of one of these poems, which may convey a more precise idea.

*On seeing Mrs. * * perform in the character of * * * **

“To you, bright fair, the Nine address their lays,
 And tune my feeble voice to sing thy praise.
 The heart-felt power of every charm divine,
 Who can withstand their all-commanding shine?
 See how she moves along with every grace,
 While soul-brought tears steal down each shining face!
 She speaks, 't is rapture all and nameless bliss—
 Ye gods! what transport e'er compar'd to this?
 As when in Paphian groves the queen of Love,
 With fond complaint address'd the listening Jove,
 'T was joy, and endless blisses all around,
 And rocks forgot their hardness at the sound.
 Then first, at last e'en Jove was taken in,
 And felt her charms, without disguise, within.”

And yet think not, my friend, that I have any particular animosity against the champions who are at the head of the present commotion. On the contrary, I could find pleasure in their music,

if served up at proper intervals; if I heard it only on proper occasions, and not about it wherever I go. In fact I could patronise them both; and as an instance of my condescension in this particular, they may come and give me a song at my lodgings, on an evening when I am at leisure, provided they keep a becoming distance, and stand, while they continue to entertain me, with decent humility at the door.

You perceive I have not read the seventeen books of Chinese ceremonies to no purpose. I know the proper share of respect due to every rank in society. Stage-players, fire-eaters, singing women, dancing dogs, wild beasts, and wire-walkers, as their efforts are exerted for our amusement, ought not entirely to be despised. The laws of every country should allow them to play their tricks at least with impunity. They should not be branded with the ignominious appellation of vagabonds; at least they deserve a rank in society equal to the mystery of the barbers or undertakers; and, could my influence extend so far, they should be allowed to earn even forty or fifty pounds a year, if eminent in their profession.

I am sensible, however, that you will censure me for profusion in this respect, bred up as you are in the narrow prejudices of Eastern frugality. You will undoubtedly assert that such a stipend is too great for so useless an employment. Yet how will your surprise increase, when told that,

though the law holds them as vagabonds,¹ many of them earn more than a thousand a year! You are amazed. There is cause for amazement. A vagabond with a thousand a year is indeed a curiosity in nature; a wonder far surpassing the flying fish, petrified crab, or travelling lobster. However, from my great love to the profession, I would willingly have them divested of part of their contempt, and part of their finery; the law should kindly take them under the wing of protection, fix them into a corporation like that of the barbers, and abridge their ignominy and their pensions. As to their abilities in other respects, I would leave that entirely to the public, who are certainly in this the properest judges—whether they despise them or no.

Yes, my Fum, I would abridge their pensions. A theatrical warrior, who conducts the battles of the stage, should be cooped up with the same caution as a bantam cock that is kept for fighting. When one of those animals is taken from its native dung-hill, we retrench it both in the quantity of its food and the number of its seraglio: players should in the same manner be fed, not fattened; they should be permitted to get their bread, but not to eat the people's bread into the bargain; and, instead of being permitted to keep four mistresses, in

¹ In China, stage-players are considered infamous, and inadmissible as candidates for the office of a mandarin. By an enactment of the Emperor Kien-lung, it requires three generations to wipe off the stain.

conscience they should be contented only with two.

Were stage-players thus brought into bounds, perhaps we should find their admirers less sanguine, and consequently less ridiculous, in patronising them. We should no longer be struck with the absurdity of seeing the same people, whose valour makes such a figure abroad, apostrophising in the praise of a bouncing blockhead, and wrangling in the defence of a copper-tailed actress at home.

I shall conclude my letter with the sensible admonition of M^ê the philosopher. "You love harmony," says he, "and are charmed with music. I do not blame you for hearing a fine voice, when you are in your closet, with a lovely parterre under your eye, or in the night-time, while perhaps the moon diffuses her silver rays. But is a man to carry this passion so far as to let a company of comedians, musicians, and singers grow rich upon his exhausted fortune? If so, he resembles one of those dead bodies whose brains the embalmer has picked out through its ears."—Adieu.

LETTER LXXXVI

THE RACES OF NEWMARKET RIDICULED—DESCRIPTION OF A CART-RACE

From the Same

OF all the places of amusement where gentlemen and ladies are entertained, I have not been yet to visit Newmarket. This, I am told is a large field, where upon certain occasions three or four horses are brought together, then set a-running, and that horse which runs fastest wins the wager.

This is reckoned a very polite and fashionable amusement here, much more followed by the nobility than partridge-fighting at Java, or paper kites in Madagascar: several of the great here, I am told, understand as much of farriery as their grooms; and a horse with any share of merit can never want a patron among the nobility.

We have a description of this entertainment almost every day in some of the gazettes, as for instance: "On such a day the Give and Take Plate was run for between his Grace's Crab, his

Lordship's Periwinkle, and Squire Smackem's Slamerkin. All rode their own horses. There was the greatest concourse of nobility that has been known here for several seasons. The odds were in favour of Crab in the beginning, but Slamerkin, after the first heat, seemed to have the match hollow; however, it was soon seen that Periwinkle improved in wind, which at last turned out accordingly; Crab was run to a standstill, Slamerkin was knocked up, and Periwinkle was brought in with universal applause." Thus, you see, Periwinkle received universal applause; and, no doubt, his Lordship came in for some share of that praise which was so liberally bestowed upon Periwinkle. Sun of China! how glorious must the senator appear in his cap and leather breeches, his whip crossed in his mouth, and thus coming to the goal, amongst the shouts of grooms, jockeys, pimps, stable-bred dukes, and degraded generals!

From the description of this princely amusement now transcribed, and from the great veneration I have for the characters of its principal promoters, I make no doubt but I shall look upon an horse-race with becoming reverence, predisposed as I am by a similar amusement, of which I have lately been a spectator; for just now I happened to have an opportunity of being present at a cart-race.

Whether this contention between three carts of different parishes was promoted by a subscription among the nobility, or whether the grand jury,

in council assembled, had gloriously combined to encourage plaustral¹ merit, I cannot take upon me to determine; but certain it is, the whole was conducted with the utmost regularity and decorum, and the company, which made a brilliant appearance, were universally of opinion that the sport was high, the running fine, and the riders influenced by no bribe.

It was run on the road from London to a village called Brentford, between a turnip-cart, a dust-cart, and a dung-cart; each of the owners condescending to mount, and be his own driver. The odds at starting were Dust against Dung five to four; but, after half a mile's going, the knowing ones found themselves all on the wrong side, and it was Turnip against the field, brass to silver.

Soon, however, the contest became more doubtful; Turnip indeed kept the way, but it was perceived that Dung had better bottom. The road re-echoed with the shouts of the spectators. "Dung against Turnip! Turnip against Dung!" was now the universal cry; neck and neck; one rode lighter, but the other had more judgment. I could not but particularly observe the ardour with which the fair sex espoused the cause of the different riders on this occasion; one was charmed with the unwashed beauties of Dung; another was captivated with the patibulary aspect of Turnip; while, in the meantime, unfortunate gloomy Dust,

¹ This, and another word in the same letter, *patibulary*, are among the very few words which Goldsmith has ventured to coin.

who came whipping behind, was cheered by the encouragements of some, and pity of all.

The contention now continued for some time, without a possibility of determining to whom victory designed the prize. The winning-post appeared in view, and he who drove the turnip-cart assured himself of success; and successful he might have been, had his horse been as ambitious as he; but, on approaching a turn from the road, which led homewards, the horse fairly stood still, and refused to move a foot farther. The dung-cart had scarce time to enjoy this temporary triumph, when it was pitched headlong into a ditch by the wayside, and the rider left to wallow in congenial mud. Dust, in the mean time, soon came up, and, not being far from the post, came in, amidst the shouts and acclamations of all the spectators, and greatly caressed by all the quality of Brentford. Fortune was kind only to one, who ought to have been favourable to all; each had peculiar merit, each laboured hard to earn the prize, and each richly deserved the cart he drove.

I do not know whether this description may not have anticipated that which I intended giving of Newmarket.¹ I am told there is little else to

¹ "Since the year 1753, the race ground at Newmarket has been the property of the Jockey Club. Betting posts are placed on various parts of the heath, at some one of which the sportsmen assemble immediately after each race, to make their bets on the one that is to follow. As not more than half an hour elapses during the events, the scene is one of the most animated description, and a stranger would imagine that all the tongues of Babel were let loose again. No country under the heavens produces such a

be seen even there. There may be some minute differences in the dress of the spectators, but none at all in their understandings; the quality of Brentford are as remarkable for politeness and delicacy as the breeders of Newmarket. The quality of Brentford drive their own carts, and the honourable fraternity of Newmarket ride their own horses. In short, the matches in one place are as rational as those in the other; and it is more than probable that turnips, dust, and dung are all that can be found to furnish out description in either.

Forgive me, my friend, but a person like me, bred up in a philosophic seclusion, is apt to regard perhaps with too much asperity those occurrences which sink man below his station in nature, and diminish the intrinsic value of humanity.

scene as this. 'What do you bet on this race, my lord?' says a vulgar-looking man, on a shabby hack, with a shocking bad hat. 'I want to back the field,' says my lord. '*So do I,*' says the leg. 'I 'll bet 500 to 200 you don't name the winner,' cries my lord. 'I 'll take *six,*' exclaims the leg. 'I 'll bet it you,' roars my lord. '*I 'll double it,*' bellows the leg. 'Done,' shouts the peer. '*Treble it?*' 'No.' The bet is entered, and so much for *wanting to back the field*. Scores of such scenes take place in these momentous half-hours. All bets are paid the following morning, and £50,000 or more have been known to exchange hands in one day. Yet Newmarket is but a speck on the ocean compared with the sum total of our provincial meetings, of which there are annually about one hundred and twenty, in England, Scotland, and Wales."—"The Turf in 1833." See *Quarterly Rev.*, vol. lix., p. 389.

LETTER LXXXVII

THE FOLLY OF THE WESTERN PARTS OF EUROPE IN
EMPLOYING THE RUSSIANS TO FIGHT THEIR
BATTLES.

From Fum Hoam to Lien Chi Altangi

YOU tell me the people of Europe are wise; but where lies their wisdom? You say they are valiant too; yet I have some reason to doubt of their valour. They are engaged in war among each other, yet apply to the Russians, their neighbours and ours, for assistance. Cultivating such an alliance argues at once imprudence and timidity. All subsidies paid for such an aid is strengthening the Russians, already too powerful, and weakening the employers, already exhausted by intestine commotions.

I cannot avoid beholding the Russian empire as the natural enemy of the more western parts of Europe; as an enemy already possessed of great strength, and, from the nature of the government, every day threatening to become more powerful. This extensive empire, which, both in Europe and

Asia, occupies almost a third of the Old World, was, about two centuries ago, divided into separate kingdoms and dukedoms, and, from such a division, consequently feeble. Since the times, however, of Johan Basilides, it has increased in strength and extent; and those untrodden forests, those innumerable savage animals, which formerly covered the face of the country, are now removed, and colonies of mankind planted in their room. A kingdom thus enjoying peace internally, possessed of an unbounded extent of dominion, and learning the military art at the expense of others abroad, must every day grow more powerful; and it is probable we shall hear Russia in future times, as formerly, called the *officina gentium*.

It was long the wish of Peter, their great monarch, to have a fort in some of the western parts of Europe; many of his schemes and treaties were directed to this end, but, happily for Europe, he failed in them all. A fort in the power of this people would be like the possession of a flood-gate; and whenever ambition, interest, or necessity prompted, they might then be able to deluge the whole Western world with a barbarous inundation.

Believe me, my friend, I cannot sufficiently condemn the politicians of Europe, who thus make this powerful people arbitrators in their quarrel. The Russians are now at that period between refinement and barbarity, which seems most adapted to military achievement; and if once they happen

to get footing in the western parts of Europe, it is not the feeble efforts of the sons of effeminacy and dissension that can serve to remove them. The fertile valley and soft climate will ever be sufficient inducements to draw whole myriads from their native deserts, the trackless wild, or snowy mountain.

History, experience, reason, nature, expand the book of wisdom before the eyes of mankind, but they will not read. We have seen with terror a winged phalanx of famished locusts, each singly contemptible, but from multitude become hideous, cover, like clouds, the face of day, and threaten the whole world with ruin. We have seen them settling on the fertile plains of India and Egypt, destroying in an instant the labours and the hopes of nations; sparing neither the fruit of the earth, nor the verdure of the fields, and changing into a frightful desert landscapes of once luxuriant beauty. We have seen myriads of ants issuing together from the southern desert, like a torrent whose source was inexhaustible, succeeding each other without end, and renewing their destroyed forces with unwearied perseverance, bringing desolation wherever they came, banishing men and animals, and, when destitute of all subsistence, in heaps infecting the wilderness which they had made! Like these have been the migrations of men. When as yet savage, and almost resembling their brute partners in the forest, subject like them only to the instincts of nature, and directed

by hunger alone in the choice of an abode, how have we seen whole armies starting wild at once from their forests and their dens—Goths, Huns, Vandals, Saracens, Turks, Tartars, myriads of men, animals in human form, without country, without name, without laws, overpowering by numbers all opposition, ravaging cities, overturning empires! and, after having destroyed whole nations, and spread extensive desolation, how have we seen them sink oppressed by some new enemy, more barbarous and even more unknown than they! Adieu.

LETTER LXXXVIII

THE LADIES ADVISED TO GET HUSBANDS—A STORY TO THIS PURPOSE

*From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first president of the Cere-
monial Academy at Pekin, in China*

AS the instruction of the fair sex in this country is entirely committed to the care of foreigners, as their language-masters, music-masters, hair-frizzers, and governesses are all from abroad, I had some intentions of opening a female academy myself, and made no doubt, as I was quite a foreigner, of meeting a favourable reception.

In this, I intended to instruct the ladies in all the conjugal mysteries: wives should be taught the art of managing husbands, and maids the skill of properly choosing them; I would teach a wife how far she might venture to be sick without giving disgust; she should be acquainted with the great benefits of the colic in the stomach, and all the thoroughbred insolence of fashion; maids should learn the secret of nicely distinguishing every com-

petitor; they should be able to know the difference between a pedant and a scholar, a citizen and a prig, a squire and his horse, a beau and his monkey; but chiefly, they should be taught the art of managing their smiles, from the contemptuous simper to the long laborious laugh.

But I have discontinued the project; for what would signify teaching ladies the manner of governing or choosing husbands, when marriage is at present so much out of fashion that a lady is very well off who can get any husband at all? Celibacy now prevails in every rank of life; the streets are crowded with old bachelors, and the houses with ladies who have refused good offers and are never likely to receive any for the future.

The only advice, therefore, I could give the fair sex, as things stand at present, is to get husbands as fast as they can. There is certainly nothing in the whole creation, not even Babylon in ruins, more truly deplorable than a lady in the virgin bloom of sixty-three, or a battered unmarried beau, who squibs about from place to place, showing his pigtail wig and his ears. The one appears to my imagination in the form of a double night-cap, or a roll of pomatum; the other in the shape of an electuary, or a box of pills.

I would once more, therefore, advise the ladies to get husbands. I would desire them not to discard an old lover without very sufficient reasons, nor treat the new with ill-nature till they know him false; let not prudes allege the falseness of the sex,

coquettes the pleasure of long courtship, or parents the necessary preliminaries of penny for penny. I have reasons that would silence even a casuist in this particular. In the first place, therefore, I divide the subject into fifteen heads, and then *sic argumentor*—But, not to give you and myself the spleen, be contented at present with an Indian tale.

In a winding of the river Amidar, just before it falls into the Caspian Sea, there lies an island unfrequented by the inhabitants of the continent. In this seclusion, blest with all that wild, uncultivated nature could bestow, lived a princess and her two daughters. She had been wrecked upon the coast while her children as yet were infants, who, of consequence, though grown up, were entirely unacquainted with man. Yet, inexperienced as the young ladies were in the opposite sex, both early discovered symptoms, the one of prudery, the other of being a coquette. The eldest was ever learning maxims of wisdom and discretion from her mamma, while the youngest employed all her hours in gazing at her own face in a neighbouring fountain.

Their usual amusement in this solitude was fishing. Their mother had taught them all the secrets of the art: she showed them which were the most likely places to throw out the line, what baits were most proper for the various seasons, and the best manner to draw up the finny prey, when they had hooked it. In this manner they spent their

time, easy and innocent, till one day the princess, being indisposed, desired them to go and catch her a sturgeon or a shark for supper, which she fancied might sit easy on her stomach. The daughters obeyed, and clapping on a goldfish, the usual bait on those occasions, went and sat upon one of the rocks, letting the gilded hook glide down with the stream.

On the opposite shore, farther down, at the mouth of the river, lived a diver for pearls, a youth who, by long habit in his trade, was almost grown amphibious; so that he could remain whole hours at the bottom of the water, without ever fetching breath. He happened to be at that very instant diving when the ladies were fishing with the gilded hook. Seeing therefore the bait, which to him had the appearance of real gold, he was resolved to seize the prize; but both his hands being already filled with pearl oysters, he found himself obliged to snap at it with his mouth: the consequence is easily imagined; the hook, before unperceived, was instantly fastened in his jaw, nor could he, with all his efforts or his floundering, get free.

"Sister," cries the youngest princess, "I have certainly caught a monstrous fish; I never perceived anything struggle so at the end of my line before; come and help me to draw it in." They both now, therefore, assisted in fishing up the diver on shore; but nothing could equal their surprise upon seeing him. "Bless my eyes," cries the prude, "what have we got here? this is a very odd

fish to be sure; I never saw anything in my life look so queer: what eyes, what terrible claws, what a monstrous snout! I have read of this monster somewhere before, it certainly must be a tanlang that eats women; let us throw it back into the sea where we found it."

The diver, in the meantime, stood upon the beach at the end of the line, with the hook in his mouth, using every art that he thought could best excite pity, and particularly looking extremely tender, which is usual in such circumstances. The coquette, therefore, in some measure influenced by the innocence of his looks, ventured to contradict her companion. "Upon my word, sister," says she, "I see nothing in the animal so very terrible as you are pleased to apprehend; I think it may serve well enough for a change. Always sharks, and sturgeons, and lobsters, and crawfish, make me quite sick. I fancy a slice of this nicely gril-laded, and dressed up with shrimp sauce, would be very pretty eating. I fancy mamma would like a bit with pickles above all things in the world; and if it should not sit easy upon her stomach, it will be time enough to discontinue it when found disagreeable, you know." "Horrid!" cries the prude; "would the girl be poisoned? I tell you it is a tanlang; I have read of it in twenty places. It is everywhere described as the most pernicious animal that ever infested the ocean. I am certain it is the most insidious, ravenous creature in the world, and it is certain destruction if taken

internally." The youngest sister was now therefore obliged to submit; both assisted in drawing the hook with some violence from the diver's jaw; and he finding himself at liberty, bent his breast against the broad wave, and disappeared in an instant.

Just at this juncture the mother came down to the beach, to know the cause of her daughters' delay: they told her every circumstance, describing the monster they had caught. The old lady was one of the most discreet women in the world; she was called the black-eyed princess, from two black eyes she had received in her youth, being a little addicted to boxing in her liquor. "Alas, my children," cries she, "what have you done! the fish you caught was a man-fish; one of the most tame domestic animals in the world. We could have let him run and play about the garden, and he would have been twenty times more entertaining than our squirrel or monkey." "If that be all," says the young coquette, "we will fish for him again. If that be all, I'll hold three tooth-picks to one pound of snuff I catch him whenever I please." Accordingly they threw in their line once more, but with all their gilding, and paddling, and assiduity, they could never after catch the diver. In this state of solitude and disappointment they continued for many years, still fishing, but without success; till at last the genius of the place, in pity to their distresses, changed the prude into a shrimp, and the coquette into an oyster. Adieu.

LETTER LXXXIX

THE FOLLY OF REMOTE OR USELESS DISQUISITIONS AMONG THE LEARNED

From the Same

I AM amused, my dear Fum, with the labours of some of the learned here. One shall write you a whole folio on the dissection of a caterpillar. Another shall swell his works with a description of the plumage on the wing of a butterfly; a third shall see a little world on a peach-leaf, and publish a book to describe what his readers might see more clearly in two minutes, only by being furnished with eyes and a microscope.

I have frequently compared the understandings of such men to their own glasses. Their field of vision is too contracted to take in the whole of any but minute objects. They view all nature bit by bit: now the proboscis, now the antennæ, now the pinnæ of—a flea. Now the polypus comes to breakfast upon a worm; now it is kept up to see

how long it will live without eating; now it is turned inside outward, and now it sickens and dies. Thus they proceed, laborious in trifles, constant in experiment, without one single abstraction, by which alone knowledge may be properly said to increase; till at last their ideas, ever employed upon minute things, contract to the size of the diminutive object, and a single mite shall fill the whole mind's capacity.

Yet, believe me, my friend, ridiculous as these men are to the world, they are set up as objects of esteem for each other. They have particular places appointed for their meetings; in which one shows his cockleshell, and is praised by all the society; another produces his powder, makes some experiments that result in nothing, and comes off with admiration and applause; a third comes out with the important discovery of some new process in the skeleton of a mole, and is set down as the accurate and sensible; while one still more fortunate than the rest, by pickling, potting, and preserving monsters, rises into unbounded reputation.

The labours of such men, instead of being calculated to amuse the public, are laid out only in diverting each other. The world becomes very little the better or the wiser for knowing what is the peculiar food of an insect that is itself the food of another, which in its turn is eaten by a third; but there are men who have studied themselves into a habit of investigating and admiring such

minutiæ. To these such subjects are pleasing, as there are some who contentedly spend whole days in endeavouring to solve enigmas, or disentangle the puzzling sticks of children.

But of all the learned, those who pretend to investigate remote antiquity have least to plead in their own defence, when they carry this passion to a faulty excess. They are generally found to supply by conjecture the want of record, and then by perseverance are wrought up into a confidence of the truth of opinions which even to themselves at first appeared founded only in imagination.

The Europeans have heard much of the kingdom of China; its politeness, arts, commerce, laws, and morals are, however, but very imperfectly known among them. They have even now in their Indian warehouses numberless utensils, plants, minerals, and machines, of the use of which they are entirely ignorant, nor can any among them even make a probable guess for what they might have been designed. Yet, though this people be so ignorant of the present real state of China, the philosophers I am describing have entered into long, learned, laborious disputes about what China was two thousand years ago. China and European happiness are but little connected even at this day; but European happiness and China two thousand years ago have certainly no connexion at all. However, the learned have written on and pursued the subject through all the labyrinths of

antiquity: though the early dews and the tainted gale be passed away, though no footsteps remain to direct the doubtful chase, yet still they run forward, open upon the uncertain scent, and, though in fact they follow nothing, are earnest in the pursuit. In this chase, however, they all take different ways. One, for example, confidently assures us that China was peopled by a colony from Egypt. Sesostris, he observes, led his army as far as the Ganges; therefore, if he went so far, he might still have gone as far as China, which is but about a thousand miles from thence; therefore he did go to China; therefore China was not peopled before he went there; therefore it was peopled by him. Besides, the Egyptians have pyramids; the Chinese have in like manner their porcelain tower: the Egyptians used to light up candles upon every rejoicing; the Chinese have lanterns upon the same occasion: the Egyptians had their great river; so have the Chinese. But what serves to put the matter past a doubt is that the ancient kings of China and those of Egypt were called by the same names. The Emperor Ki is certainly the same with King Atoes; for if we only change *K* into *A*, and *i* into *toes*, we shall have the name Atoes; and with equal ease Menes may be proved to be the same with the Emperor Yu; therefore the Chinese are a colony from Egypt.

But another of the learned is entirely different from the last; and he will have the Chinese to be a

colony planted by Noah just after the Deluge. First from the vast similitude there is between the name of Fohi, the founder of the Chinese monarchy, and that of Noah, the preserver of the human race. Noah, Fohi, very like each other truly; they have each but four letters, and only two of the four happen to differ. But to strengthen the argument, Fohi, as the Chinese chronicle asserts, had no father. Noah, it is true, had a father, as the European Bible tells us; but then, as this father was probably drowned in the flood, it is just the same as if he had no father at all; therefore Noah and Fohi are the same. Just after the flood, the earth was covered with mud; if it was covered with mud, it must have been incrustated mud; if it was incrustated, it was clothed with verdure: this was a fine, unembarrassed road for Noah to fly from his wicked children; he therefore did fly from them, and took a journey of two thousand miles for his own amusement; therefore Noah and Fohi are the same.

Another sect of literati, for they all pass among the vulgar for very great scholars, assert that the Chinese came neither from the colony of Sesostris nor from Noah, but are descended from Magog, Meshec, and Tubal, and therefore neither Sesostris, nor Noah, nor Fohi, are the same.

It is thus, my friend, that indolence assumes the airs of wisdom, and, while it tosses the cup and ball with infantine folly, desires the world to look

on, and calls the stupid pastime philosophy and learning.¹ Adieu.

¹ "That shrewd critic and commentator on the writings of the Jesuits on China, M. Pauw, exposed the absurdity of this supposition that the Chinese are an Egyptian colony; and we entirely agree that such an assumption is not supported by any testimony either direct or circumstantial. In truth, there exists not the slightest shadow of resemblance between the Chinese written characters or symbols and the hieroglyphics of Egypt; and, we may add, neither do the physical characteristics of colour, form, and features in the two races in the least accord—whether we take the present Copts, the figures on the temples, or the mummies in the tombs to be the true representatives of the ancient Egyptians."—*Quart. Rev.*, vol. lvi., p. 493.

LETTER XC

THE ENGLISH SUBJECT TO THE SPLEEN

From the Same

WHEN the men of this country are once turned of thirty, they regularly retire every year, at proper intervals, to lie in of the spleen. The vulgar, unfurnished with the luxurious comforts of the soft cushion, down bed, and easy chair, are obliged, when the fit is on them, to nurse it up by drinking, idleness, and ill-humour. In such dispositions, unhappy is the foreigner who happens to cross them; his long chin, tarnished coat, or pinched hat are sure to receive no quarter. If they meet no foreigner, however, to fight with, they are in such cases generally content with beating each other.

The rich, as they have more sensibility, are operated upon with greater violence by this disorder. Different from the poor, instead of becoming more insolent, they grow totally unfit for opposition. A general here, who would have faced a culverin when well, if the fit be on him

shall hardly find courage to snuff a candle. An admiral, who could have opposed a broadside without shrinking, shall sit whole days in his chamber, mobbed up in double night-caps, shuddering at the intrusive breeze, and distinguishable from his wife only by his black beard and heavy eyebrows.

In the country this disorder mostly attacks the fair sex; in town it is most unfavourable to the men. A lady who has pined whole years amidst cooing doves and complaining nightingales, in rural retirement, shall resume all her vivacity in one night at a city gaming-table; her husband, who roared, hunted, and got drunk at home, shall grow splenetic in town, in proportion to his wife's good humour. Upon their arrival in London they exchange their disorders. In consequence of her parties and excursions, he puts on the furred cap and scarlet stomacher, and perfectly resembles an Indian husband, who, when his wife is safely delivered, permits her to transact business abroad, while he undergoes all the formality of keeping his bed, and receiving all the condolence in her place.

But those who reside constantly in town owe this disorder mostly to the influence of the *weather*.¹ It is impossible to describe what a variety

¹ "I must needs add one thing more in favour of our climate, which I heard the king (Charles II.) say, and I thought new and right, and truly like a king of England that loved and esteemed his own country; it was in reply to some of the company that were reviling our climate, and extolling those of Italy and Spain, or at least of France: he said he thought that was the best climate where he could be abroad in the air with pleasure, or at least without trouble or inconvenience, the most days in the year and the

of transmutations an east wind will produce; it has been known to change a lady of fashion into a parlour couch, an alderman into a plate of custards, and a dispenser of justice into a rat-trap. Even philosophers themselves are not exempt from its influence; it has often converted a poet into a coral and bells, and a patriot senator into a dumb waiter.

Some days ago I went to visit the Man in Black, and entered his house with that cheerfulness which the certainty of a favourable reception always inspires. Upon opening the door of his apartment, I found him with the most rueful face imaginable, in a morning gown and a flannel night-cap, earnestly employed in learning to blow the German flute. Struck with the absurdity of a man in the decline of life thus blowing away all his constitution and spirits, even without the consolation of being musical, I ventured to ask what could induce him to attempt learning so difficult an instrument so late in life. To this he made no reply, but groaning, and still holding the flute to his lips, continued to gaze at me for some moments very angrily, and then proceeded to practise his gamut as before. After having produced a variety

most hours of the day; and this he thought he could be in England more than in any country he knew of in Europe. And I believe it is true, not only of the hot and the cold, but even among our neighbours in France, and the Low Countries themselves, where the heats and the colds, and changes of seasons, are less treatable than they are with us."—SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE'S *Works*, ed. 1770, iii., 219.

of the most hideous tones in nature, at last turning to me he demanded whether I did not think he had made a surprising progress in two days. "You see," continues he, "I have got the *ambusheer* already, and as for fingering, my master tells me I shall have that in a few lessons more." I was so much astonished with this instance of inverted ambition that I knew not what to reply, but soon discerned the cause of all his absurdities: my friend was under a metamorphosis by the power of spleen, and flute-blowing was unluckily become his adventitious passion.

In order, therefore, to banish his anxiety imperceptibly, by seeming to indulge it, I began to descant on those gloomy topics by which philosophers often get rid of their own spleen, by communicating it: the wretchedness of man in this life; the happiness of some, wrought out of the miseries of others; the necessity that wretches should expire under punishment that rogues might enjoy affluence in tranquillity. I led him on from the inhumanity of the rich to the ingratitude of the beggar; from the insincerity of refinement to the fierceness of rusticity; and at last had the good fortune to restore him to his usual serenity of temper by permitting him to expatiate upon all the modes of human misery.

"Some nights ago," says my friend, "sitting alone by my fire, I happened to look into an account of the detection of a set of men called the thief-takers. I read over the many hideous cruel-



ties of those haters of mankind; of their pretended friendship to wretches they meant to betray; of their sending men out to rob, and then hanging them. I could not avoid sometimes interrupting the narrative, by crying out, 'Yet these are men!' As I went on, I was informed that they had lived by this practice several years, and had been enriched by the price of blood: 'and yet,' cried I, 'I have been sent into the world, and am desired to call these men my brothers!' I read that the very man who led the condemned wretch to the gallows was he who falsely swore his life away: 'and yet,' continued I, 'that perjurer had just such a nose, such lips, such hands, and such eyes as Newton.' I at last came to the account of the wretch that was searched after robbing one of the thief-takers of half-a-crown. Those of the confederacy knew that he had got but that single half-crown in the world; after a long search, therefore, which they knew would be fruitless, and taking from him the half-crown, which they knew was all he had, one of the gang compassionately cried out, 'Alas! poor creature, let him keep all the rest he has got; it will do him service in Newgate, where we are sending him.' This was an instance of such complicated guilt and hypocrisy that I threw down the book in an agony of rage, and began to think with malice of all the human kind. I sat silent for some minutes, and, soon perceiving the ticking of my watch beginning to grow noisy and troublesome, I quickly placed it out of hearing,

and strove to resume my serenity. But the watchman soon gave me a second alarm. I had scarcely recovered from this when my peace was assaulted by the wind at my window; and when that ceased to blow, I listened for death-watches in the wainscot. I now found my whole system discomposed. I strove to find a resource in philosophy and reason; but what could I oppose, or where direct my blow, when I could see no enemy to combat? I saw no misery approaching, nor knew any I had to fear, yet still I was miserable. Morning came; I sought for tranquillity in dissipation, sauntered from one place of public resort to another, but found myself disagreeable to my acquaintance, and ridiculous to others. I tried at different times dancing, fencing, and riding; I solved geometrical problems, shaped tobacco-stoppers, wrote verses, and cut paper. At last, I placed my affections on music, and find that earnest employment, if it cannot cure, at least will palliate every anxiety." Adieu.

LETTER XCI

THE INFLUENCE OF CLIMATE AND SOIL UPON THE
TEMPER AND DISPOSITIONS OF THE ENGLISH

From the Same

IT is no unpleasing contemplation to consider the influence which soil and climate have upon the disposition of the inhabitants, the animals, and vegetables of different countries. That among the brute creation is much more visible than in man, and that in vegetables more than either. In some places, those plants which are entirely poisonous at home lose their deleterious quality by being carried abroad; there are serpents in Macedonia so harmless as to be used as playthings for children; and we are told that in some parts of Fez there are lions so very timorous as to be scared away, though coming in herds, by the cries of women.

I know of no country where the influence of climate and soil is more visible than in England; the same hidden cause which gives courage to their dogs and cocks gives also fierceness to their

men. But chiefly this ferocity appears among the vulgar. The polite of every country pretty nearly resemble each other. But, as in simpling it is among the uncultivated productions of nature we are to examine the characteristic differences of climate and soil, so in an estimate of the genius of a people we must look among the sons of unpolished rusticity. The vulgar English, therefore, may be easily distinguished from all the rest of the world by superior pride, impatience, and a peculiar hardness of soul.

Perhaps no qualities in the world are more susceptible of a fine polish than these; artificial complaisance and easy deference being superinduced over these generally form a great character something at once elegant and majestic, affable yet sincere. Such in general are the better sort; but they who are left in primitive rudeness are the least disposed for society with others, or comfort internally, of any people under the sun.

The poor, indeed, of every country, are but little prone to treat each other with tenderness; their own miseries are too apt to engross all their pity; and perhaps, too, they give but little commiseration as they find but little from others. But in England the poor treat each other, upon every occasion, with more than savage animosity, and as if they were in a state of open war by nature. In China, if two porters should meet in a narrow street, they would lay down their burthens, make a thousand excuses to each other for the accidental

interruption, and beg pardon on their knees: if two men of the same occupation should meet here, they would first begin to scold, and at last to beat each other. One would think they had miseries enough resulting from penury and labour, not to increase them by ill-nature among themselves, and subjection to new penalties; but such considerations never weigh with them.

But to recompense this strange absurdity, they are in the main generous, brave, and enterprising. They feel the slightest injuries with a degree of ungoverned impatience, but resist the greatest calamities with surprising fortitude.¹ Those miseries under which any other people in the world would sink, they have often showed they were capable of enduring; if accidentally cast upon some desolate coast, their perseverance is beyond what any other nation is capable of sustaining; if imprisoned for crimes, their efforts to escape are greater than among others. The peculiar strength of their prisons, when compared to those elsewhere, argues their hardiness; even the strongest prisons I have ever seen in other countries would be very insufficient to confine the untamable spirit of an Englishman. In short, what man dares do in circumstances of danger, an Englishman will. His virtues seem to sleep in the calm, and are called out only to combat the kindred storm.

¹ "Stern o'er each bosom reason holds her state
With daring aims irregularly great," etc.

See *The Traveller*, I., 24.

But the greatest eulogy of this people is the generosity of their miscreants; the tenderness, in general, of their robbers and highwaymen. Perhaps no people can produce instances of the same kind, where the desperate mix pity with injustice; still show that they understand a distinction in crimes, and even in acts of violence have still some tincture of remaining virtue. In every other country, robbery and murder go almost always together; here it seldom happens, except upon ill-judged resistance or pursuit. The banditti of other countries are unmerciful to a supreme degree; the highwayman and robber here are generous, at least to the public, and pretend to virtues in their intercourse among each other. Taking, therefore, my opinion of the English from the virtues and vices practised among the vulgar, they at once present to a stranger all their faults, and keep their virtues up only for the inquiring eye of a philosopher.

Foreigners are generally shocked at their insolence upon first coming among them; they find themselves ridiculed and insulted in every street; they meet with none of those trifling civilities, so frequent elsewhere, which are instances of mutual good-will, without previous acquaintance; they travel through the country either too ignorant or too obstinate to cultivate a closer acquaintance; meet every moment something to excite their disgust, and return home to characterise this as the region of spleen, insolence, and ill-nature. In

short England would be the last place in the world I would travel to by way of amusement, but the first for instruction. I would choose to have others for my acquaintance, but Englishmen for my friends.

LETTER XCII

THE MANNER IN WHICH SOME PHILOSOPHERS MAKE ARTIFICIAL MISERY

To the Same

THE mind is ever ingenious in making its own distress. The wandering beggar, who has none to protect, or feed, or to shelter him, fancies complete happiness in labour and a full meal; take him from rags and want, feed, clothe, and employ him, his wishes now rise one step above his station; he could be happy were he possessed of raiment, food, and ease. Suppose his wishes gratified even in these, his prospects widen as he ascends; he finds himself in affluence and tranquillity indeed, but indolence soon breeds anxiety, and he desires not only to be freed from pain, but to be possessed of pleasure; pleasure is granted him, and this but opens his soul to ambition; and ambition will be sure to taint his future happiness either with jealousy, disappointment, or fatigue.

But of all the arts of distress found out by man

for his own torment, perhaps that of philosophic misery is most truly ridiculous; a passion nowhere carried to so extravagant an excess as in the country where I now reside. It is not enough to engage all the compassion of a philosopher here that his own globe is harassed with wars, pestilence, or barbarity; he shall grieve for the inhabitants of the moon, if the situation of her imaginary mountains happens to alter; and dread the extinction of the sun, if the spots on his surface happen to increase. One should imagine that philosophy was introduced to make men happy; but here it serves to make hundreds miserable.

My landlady, some days ago, brought me the diary of a philosopher of this desponding sort, who had lodged in the apartment before me. It contains the history of a life which seems to me one continued tissue of sorrow, apprehension, and distress. A single week will serve as a specimen of the whole:

“*Monday*.—In what a transient decaying situation are we placed; and what various reasons does philosophy furnish to make mankind unhappy! A single grain of mustard shall continue to produce its similitude through numberless successions; yet what has been granted to this little seed has been denied to our planetary system; the mustard-seed is still unaltered, but the system is growing old, and must quickly fall to decay. How terrible will it be when the motions of all the planets have at last become so irregular as to need repairing;

when the moon shall fall into frightful paroxysms of alteration; when the earth, deviating from its ancient track, and with every other planet forgetting its circular revolutions, shall become so eccentric that, unconfined by the laws of system, it shall fly off into boundless space, to knock against some distant world, or fall in upon the sun, either extinguishing his light, or burned up by his flames in a moment! Perhaps, while I write, this dreadful change is begun. Shield me from universal ruin! Yet, idiot man laughs, sings, and rejoices, in the very face of the sun, and seems no way touched with his situation.

"*Tuesday*.—Went to bed in great distress, awaked and was comforted by considering that this change was to happen at some indefinite time; and therefore, like death, the thoughts of it might easily be borne. But there is a revolution, a fixed, determined revolution, which must certainly come to pass; yet which, by good fortune, I shall never feel, except in my posterity. The obliquity of the equator with the ecliptic is now twenty minutes less than when it was observed two thousand years ago by Piteas. If this be the case, in six thousand the obliquity will be still less by an whole degree. This being supposed, it is evident that, our earth, as Louville has clearly proved, has a motion by which the climates must necessarily change place, and in the space of about one million of years England shall actually travel to the Antarctic pole. I shudder at the change! How

shall our unhappy grandchildren endure the hideous climate! A million of years will soon be accomplished: they are but a moment when compared to eternity; then shall our charming country, as I may say, in a moment of time, resemble the hideous wilderness of Nova Zembla.

“*Wednesday*.—To-night, by my calculation, the long-predicted comet is to make its first appearance. Heavens! what terrors are impending over our little dim speck of earth! Dreadful visitation! Are we to be scorched in its fires, or only smothered in the vapour of its tail? That is the question! Thoughtless mortals, go build houses, plant orchards, purchase estates, for to-morrow you die. But what if the comet should not come? That would be equally fatal. Comets are servants which periodically return to supply the sun with fuel. If our sun, therefore, should be disappointed of the expected supply, and all his fuel be in the meantime burnt out, he must expire like an exhausted taper. What a miserable situation must our earth be in without his enlivening ray! Have we not seen several neighbouring suns disappear? Has not a fixed star, near the tail of the Ram, lately been quite extinguished?

“*Thursday*.—The comet has not yet appeared; I am sorry for it: first, sorry because my calculation is false; secondly, sorry lest the sun should want fuel; thirdly, sorry lest the wits should laugh at our erroneous predictions; and fourthly, sorry because, if it appears to-night, it must necessarily

come within the sphere of the earth's attraction; and Heaven help the unhappy country on which it happens to fall!

"*Friday*.—Our whole society have been out, all eager in search of the comet. We have seen not less than sixteen comets in different parts of the heavens. However, we are unanimously resolved to fix upon one only to be the comet expected. That near Virgo wants nothing but a tail to fit it out completely for terrestrial admiration.

"*Saturday*.—The moon is, I find, at her old pranks. Her appulses, librations, and other irregularities indeed amaze me. My daughter, too, is this morning gone off with a grenadier. No way surprising: I was never able to give her a relish for wisdom. She ever promised to be a mere expletive in the creation. But the moon, the moon, gives me real uneasiness; I fondly fancied I had fixed her. I had thought her constant, and constant only to me; but every night discovers her infidelity, and proves me a desolate and abandoned lover." Adieu.

LETTER XCIII

THE FONDNESS OF SOME TO ADMIRE THE WRITINGS
OF LORDS, ETC.

To the Same

IT is surprising what an influence titles shall have upon the mind, even though these titles be of our own making. Like children, we dress up the puppets in finery, and then stand in astonishment at the plastic wonder. I have been told of a rat-catcher here, who strolled for a long time about the villages near town, without finding any employment; at last, however, he thought proper to take the title of his Majesty's rat-catcher in ordinary, and thus succeeded beyond his expectations: when it was known that he caught rats at court, all were ready to give him countenance and employment.

But of all the people, they who make books seem most perfectly sensible of the advantage of titular dignity. All seem convinced that a book written by vulgar hands can neither instruct nor improve; none but kings, chams, and mandarins

can write with any probability of success.¹ If the titles inform me right, not only kings and courtiers, but emperors themselves, in this country, periodically supply the press.

A man here who should write, and honestly confess that he wrote for bread, might as well send his manuscript to fire the baker's oven; not one creature will read him: all must be court-bred poets, or pretend at least to be court-bred, who can expect to please. Should the caitiff fairly avow a design of emptying our pockets, and filling his own, every reader would instantly forsake him; even those who write for bread themselves would combine to worry him, perfectly sensible that his attempts only served to take the bread out of their mouths.

And yet this silly prepossession the more amazes me when I consider that almost all the excellent productions in wit that have appeared here were purely the offspring of necessity; their Drydens, Butlers, Otways, and Farquhars were all writers for bread.² Believe me, my friend, hunger has a

¹ Goldsmith in his necessities compiled a *History of England* in a series of Letters from a Nobleman to his Son, and the immediate and large sale of the work was owing more to the title than the execution. The letters were said to be Lord Chesterfield's, or at least Lord Lyttelton's. As Oliver Goldsmith's, they would then (1764) have had but a slender sale, if indeed they would have found a publisher.

² "I have many a fatigue to encounter before that happy time comes when your poor old simple friend may again give a loose to the luxuriance of his nature, sitting by the fireside at Kilmore, recount the various adventures of a hard-fought life; laugh over

most amazing faculty of sharpening the genius; and he who with a full belly can think like a hero, after a course of fasting shall rise to the sublimity of a demi-god.

But what will most amaze is that this very set of men, who are now so much depreciated by fools, are, however, the very best writers they have among them at present. For my own part, were I to buy a hat, I would not have it from a stocking-maker, but an hatter; were I to buy shoes, I should not go to the tailor's for that purpose. It is just so with regard to wit: did I, for my life, desire to be well served, I would apply only to those who made it their trade, and lived by it. You smile at the oddity of my opinion; but be assured, my friend, that wit is in some measure mechanical, and that a man long habituated to catch at even its resemblance will at last be happy enough to possess the substance. By a long habit of writing he acquires a justness of thinking, and a mastery of manner, which holiday-writers, even with ten times his genius, may vainly attempt to equal.

How then are they deceived who expect from title, dignity, and exterior circumstance an excellence which is in some measure acquired by habit and sharpened by necessity! You have seen, like me, many literary reputations promoted by the influence of fashion, which have scarce survived the

the follies of the day; join his flute to your harpischord; and forget that he ever starved in those streets where Butler and Otway starved before him."—GOLDSMITH to *Mrs. Lawder*, August, 1758.

possessor; you have seen the poor hardly earn the little reputation they acquired, and their merit only acknowledged when they were incapable of enjoying the pleasures of popularity: such, however, is the reputation worth possessing; that which is hardly earned is hardly lost. Adieu.

LETTER XCIV

THE PHILOSOPHER'S SON IS AGAIN SEPARATED FROM
HIS BEAUTIFUL COMPANION

From Hingpo in Moscow, to Lien Chi Altangi in London

WHERE will my disappointments end? Must I still be doomed to accuse the severity of my fortune, and show my constancy in distress, rather than moderation in prosperity? I had at least hopes of conveying my charming companion safe from the reach of every enemy, and of again restoring her to her native soil. But those hopes are now no more.

Upon leaving Terki, we took the nearest road to the dominions of Russia. We passed the Ural Mountains covered with eternal snow, and traversed the forests of Ufa, where the prowling bear and shrieking hyena keep an undisputed possession. We next embarked upon the rapid river Bulija, and made the best of our way to the banks of the Wolga, where it waters the fruitful valleys of Casan.

There were two vessels in company, properly

equipped and armed, in order to oppose the Wolga pirates, who, we were informed, infested this river. Of all mankind these pirates are the most terrible. They are composed of the criminals and outlawed peasants of Russia, who fly to the forests that lie along the banks of the Wolga for protection. Here they join in parties, lead a savage life, and have no other subsistence but plunder. Being deprived of houses, friends, or a fixed habitation, they become more terrible even than the tiger, and as insensible to all the feelings of humanity. They neither give quarter to those they conquer, nor receive it when overpowered themselves. The severity of the laws against them serve to increase their barbarity, and seem to make them a neutral species of beings, between the wildness of the lion and the subtlety of the man. When taken alive their punishment is hideous. A floating gibbet is erected, which is let run down with the stream; here, upon an iron hook stuck under their ribs, and upon which the whole weight of their body depends, they are left to expire in the most terrible agonies; some being thus found to linger several days successively.

We were but three days' voyage from the confluence of this river into the Wolga, when we perceived at a distance behind us an armed bark coming up with the assistance of sails and oars, in order to attack us. The dreadful signal of death was hung upon the mast, and our captain with his glass could easily discern them to be pirates. It is



impossible to express our consternation on this occasion; the whole crew instantly came together to consult the properest means of safety. It was, therefore, soon determined to send off our women and valuable commodities in one of our vessels, and that the men should stay in the other and boldly oppose the enemy. This resolution was soon put into execution, and I now reluctantly parted from the beautiful Zelis, for the first time since our retreat from Persia. The vessel in which she was disappeared to my longing eyes, in proportion as that of the pirates approached us. They soon came up; but, upon examining our strength, and perhaps sensible of the manner in which we had sent off our most valuable effects, they seemed more eager to pursue the vessel we had sent away than attack us. In this manner they continued to harass us for three days, still endeavouring to pass us without fighting. But, on the fourth day, finding it entirely impossible, and despairing to seize the expected booty, they desisted from their endeavours, and left us to pursue our voyage without interruption.

Our joy on this occasion was great; but soon a disappointment, more terrible because unexpected, succeeded. The bark in which our women and treasure were sent off, was wrecked upon the banks of the Wolga, for want of a proper number of hands to manage her, and the whole crew carried by the peasants up the country. Of this, however, we were not sensible till our arrival at Moscow;

where, expecting to meet our separated bark, we were informed of its misfortune and our loss.

Need I paint the situation of my mind on this occasion! Need I describe all I feel, when I despair of beholding the beautiful Zelis more! Fancy had dressed the future prospect of my life in the gayest colouring, but one unexpected stroke of fortune has robbed it of every charm. Her dear idea mixes with every scene of pleasure, and without her presence to enliven it, the whole becomes tedious, insipid, insupportable. I will confess,—now that she is lost, I will confess, I loved her; nor is it in the power of time, or of reason, to erase her image from my heart. Adieu.

LETTER XCV¹

THE FATHER CONSOLES HIM UPON THIS OCCASION

From Lien Chi Altangi to Hingpo, at Moscow

YOUR misfortunes are mine; but, as every period of life is marked with its own, you must learn to endure them. Disappointed love makes the misery of youth; disappointed ambition, that of manhood; and successless avarice, that of age. These three attack us through life; and it is our duty to stand upon our guard. To love we ought to oppose dissipation, and endeavour to change the object of the affections; to ambition, the happiness of indolence and obscurity; and to avarice, the fear of soon dying. These are the shields with which we should arm ourselves; and thus make every scene of life, if not pleasing, at least supportable.

Men complain of not finding a place of repose. They are in the wrong; they have it for seeking. What they should indeed complain of is that the

¹ This letter is a rhapsody from the maxims of the philosopher. Vide *Lett. curieuses et édifiantes*; vide etiam *Du Halde*, vol. ii., p. 98.

—GOLDSMITH.

heart is an enemy to that very repose they seek. To themselves alone should they impute their discontent. They seek within the short span of life to satisfy a thousand desires each of which alone is unsatiable. One month passes and another comes on; the year ends and then begins; but man is still unchanging in folly,¹ still blindly continuing in prejudice. To the wise man every climate and every soil is pleasing; to him a parterre of flowers is the famous valley of gold; to him a little brook *the fountain of the young peach trees*;² to such a man the melody of birds is more ravishing than the harmony of a full concert; and the tincture of the cloud preferable to the touch of the finest pencil.

The life of man is a journey; a journey that must be travelled, however bad the roads or the accommodation. If in the beginning it is found dangerous, narrow, and difficult, it must either grow better in the end, or we shall by custom learn to bear its inequality.

But, though I see you incapable of penetrating into grand principles, attend at least to a simile, adapted to every apprehension. I am mounted upon a wretched ass. I see another man before me upon a sprightly horse, at which I find some

¹ "The lapse of ages changes all things—time—language—the earth—the bounds of the sea—the stars of the sky, and everything about, around, and underneath man, except man himself; who has always been, and always will be, an unlucky rascal. The infinite variety of lives conduct but to death, and the infinity of wishes lead but to disappointment."—BYRON, *Works*, vol. v., p. 66, ed. 1832.

² This passage the editor does not understand.—GOLDSMITH.

uneasiness. I look behind me, and see numbers on foot, stooping under heavy burthens: let me learn to pity their estate, and thank Heaven for my own.

Shingfu, when under misfortunes, would in the beginning weep like a child; but he soon recovered his former tranquillity. After indulging grief for a few days, he would become, as usual, the most merry old man in all the province of Shansi. About the time that his wife died, his possessions were all consumed by fire, and his only son sold into captivity; Shingfu grieved for one day, and the next went to dance at a mandarin's door for his dinner. The company were surprised to see the old man so merry, when suffering such great losses; and the mandarin himself, coming out, asked him, how he, who had grieved so much, and given way to the calamity the day before, could now be so cheerful. "You ask me one question," cries the old man, "let me answer by asking another: Which is the most durable, a hard thing, or a soft thing; that which resists, or that which makes no resistance?" "An hard thing, to be sure," replied the mandarin. "There you are wrong," returned Shingfu, "I am now fourscore years old; and if you look in my mouth you will find that I have lost all my teeth, but not a bit of my tongue." Adieu.

LETTER XCVI

THE CONDOLENCE AND CONGRATULATION UPON THE DEATH OF THE LATE KING RIDICULED— ENGLISH MOURNING DESCRIBED

*From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first president of the Cere-
monial Academy at Pekin, in China*

THE manner of grieving for our departed friends in China is very different from that of Europe. The mourning colour of Europe is black; that of China white. When a parent or relation dies here, for they seldom mourn for friends, it is only clapping on a suit of sables, grimacing it for a few days, and all, soon forgotten, goes on as before; not a single creature missing the deceased, except perhaps a favourite housekeeper or a favourite cat.

On the contrary, with us in China it is a very serious affair. The piety with which I have seen you behave on one of these occasions should never be forgotten. I remember it was upon the death of thy grandmother's maiden sister. The coffin was exposed in the principal hall in public view;

before it were placed the figures of eunuchs, horses, tortoises, and other animals, in attitudes of grief and respect. The more distant relations of the old lady, and I among the number, came to pay our compliments of condolence, and to salute the deceased after the manner of our country. We had scarce presented our wax candles and perfumes and given the howl of departure,¹ when, crawling on his belly from under a curtain, out came the reverend Fum Hoam himself, in all the dismal solemnity of distress. Your looks were set for sorrow; your clothing consisted in an hempen bag tied round the neck with a string. For two long months did this mourning continue. By night you lay stretched on a single mat, and sat on the stool of discontent by day. Pious man! who could thus set an example of sorrow and decorum to our country. Pious country! where, if we do not grieve at the departure of our friends for their sakes, at least we are taught to regret them for our own.

All is very different here; amazement all! What sort of a people am I got amongst? Fum, thou son of Fo, what sort of people am I got amongst? No crawling round the coffin; no dressing up in hempen bags: no lying on mats, or sitting on stools! Gentlemen here shall put on

¹ "When a parent or elder relation among the Chinese dies, the lineal descendants, clothed in white cloth, with bandages of the same colour round their heads, sit weeping round the corpse on the ground, the women keeping up a dismal howl, after the manner of the Irish."—DAVIS's *Chinese*, vol. i., p. 295.

first mourning with as sprightly an air as if preparing for a birth-night; and widows shall actually dress for another husband in their weeds for the former. The best jest of all is that our merry mourners clap bits of muslin on their sleeves and these are called weepers. Weeping muslin! alas, alas, very sorrowful truly! These weepers, then, it seems, are to bear the whole burden of the distress.

But I have the strongest instance of this contrast, this tragi-comical behaviour in distress, upon a recent occasion. Their king,¹ whose departure though sudden was not unexpected, died after a reign of many years. His age and uncertain state of health served, in some measure, to diminish the sorrow of his subjects; and their expectations from his successor seemed to balance their minds between uneasiness and satisfaction. But how ought they to have behaved on such an occasion? Surely, they ought rather to have endeavoured to testify their gratitude to their deceased friend than to proclaim their hopes of the future! Sure even the successor must suppose their love to wear the face of adulation, which so quickly changed the object! However, the very same day on which the old king died they made rejoicing for the new.

For my part, I have no conception of this new manner of mourning and rejoicing in a breath; of

¹ George the Second, who died October 25, 1760, in the seventy-seventh year of his age and the thirty-fourth of his reign.

being merry and sad; of mixing a funeral procession with a jig and a bonfire. At least, it would have been just that they who flattered the king while living, for virtues which he had not, should lament him dead for those he really had.

In this universal cause for national distress, as I had no interest myself, so it is but natural to suppose I felt no real affliction. "In all the losses of our friends," says an European philosopher, "we first consider how much our own welfare is affected by their departure, and moderate our real grief just in the same proportion."¹ Now, as I had neither received nor expected to receive favours from kings or their flatterers; as I had no acquaintance in particular with their late monarch; as I know that the place of a king is soon supplied; and, as the Chinese proverb has it, that though the world may sometimes want cobblers to mend their shoes, there is no danger of its wanting emperors to rule their kingdoms—from such considerations, I could bear the loss of a king with the most philosophic resignation. However, I thought it my duty at least to appear sorrowful; to put on a melancholy aspect, or to set my face by that of the people.

The first company I came amongst after the

¹ "Dans l'adversité de nos meilleurs amis, nous trouvons toujours quelque chose qui ne nous déplait pas."—ROCHEFOUCAULD.

"In all distresses of our friends,
We first consult our private ends;
While nature, kindly bent to ease us,
Points out some circumstance to please us."

SWIFT, *On his own Death*.

news became general was a set of jolly companions, who were drinking prosperity to the ensuing reign. I entered the room with looks of despair, and even expected applause for the superlative misery of my countenance. Instead of that, I was universally condemned by the company for a grimacing son of a whore, and desired to take away my penitential phiz to some other quarter. I now corrected my former mistake, and, with the most sprightly air imaginable, entered a company where they were talking over the ceremonies of the approaching funeral. Here I sat for some time with an air of pert vivacity; when one of the chief mourners, immediately observing my good-humour, desired me, if I pleased, to go and grin somewhere else; they wanted no disaffected scoundrels there. Leaving this company, therefore, I was resolved to assume a look perfectly neutral, and have ever since been studying the fashionable air—something between jest and earnest; a complete virginity of face, uncontaminated with the smallest symptom of meaning.

But though grief be a very slight affair here, the mourning, my friend, is a very important concern. When an emperor dies in China, the whole expense of the the solemnities is defrayed from the royal coffers. When the great die here, mandarins are ready enough to order mourning; but I do not see that they are so ready to pay for it. If they send me down from court the grey undress frock, or the black coat without pocket-holes, I am

willing enough to comply with their commands, and wear both; but by the head of Confucius! to be obliged to wear black, and buy it into the bargain, is more than my tranquillity of temper can bear. What! order me to wear mourning, before they know whether I can buy it or no! Fum, thou son of Fo, what sort of a people am I got amongst; where being out of black is a certain symptom of poverty; where those who have miserable faces cannot have mourning, and those who have mourning will not wear a miserable face!

LETTER XCVII

ALMOST EVERY SUBJECT OF LITERATURE HAS BEEN
ALREADY EXHAUSTED

From the Same

IT is usual for the booksellers here when a book has given universal pleasure upon one subject to bring out several more upon the same plan; which are sure to have purchasers and readers, from that desire which all men have to view a pleasing object on every side. The first performance serves rather to awake than satisfy attention; and, when that is once moved, the slightest effort serves to continue its progression: the merit of the first diffuses a light sufficient to illuminate the succeeding efforts, and no other subject can be relished till that is exhausted. A stupid work coming thus immediately in the train of an applauded performance weans the mind from the object of its pleasure; and resembles the sponge thrust into the mouth of a discharged culverin, in order to adapt it for a new explosion.

This manner, however, of drawing off a subject

or a peculiar mode of writing to the dregs, effectually precludes a revival of that subject or manner for some time for the future; the sated reader turns from it with a kind of literary nausea, and, though the titles of the books are the part of them most read, yet he has scarce perseverance enough to wade through the title-page.

Of this number I own myself one. I am now grown callous to several subjects, and different kinds of composition. Whether such originally pleased I will not take upon me to determine; but at present I spurn a new book merely upon seeing its name in an advertisement; nor have the smallest curiosity to look beyond the first leaf, even though in the second the author promises his own face "neatly engraved on copper."

I am become a perfect epicure in reading; plain beef or solid mutton will never do. I am for a Chinese dish of bears' claws and birds' nests. I am for sauce strong with asafoetida, or fuming with garlick. For this reason, there are a hundred very wise, learned, virtuous, well-intended productions that have no charms for me. Thus, for the soul of me, I could never find courage nor grace enough to wade above two pages deep into "Thoughts upon God and Nature," or "Thoughts upon Providence," or "Thoughts upon Free Grace," or indeed into "Thoughts" upon anything at all. I can no longer meditate with "Meditations for Every Day in the Year." "Essays upon Divers Subjects" cannot allure me, though

never so interesting; and as for funeral sermons, or even thanksgiving sermons, I can neither weep with the one, nor rejoice with the other.

But it is chiefly in gentle poetry where I seldom look farther than the title. The truth is, I take up books to be told something new; but here, as it is now managed, the reader is told nothing. He opens the book, and there finds very good words truly, and much exactness of rhyme, but no information. A parcel of gaudy images pass on before his imagination like the figures in a dream; but curiosity, induction, reason, and the whole train of affections are fast asleep. The *jucunda et idonea vitæ*, those sallies which mend the heart while they amuse the fancy, are quite forgotten, so that a reader who would take up some modern applauded performances of this kind must, in order to be pleased, first leave his good sense behind him, take for his recompense and guide bloated and compound epithet, and dwell on paintings, just indeed, because laboured with minute exactness.

If we examine, however, our internal sensations, we shall find ourselves but little pleased with such laboured vanities; we shall find that our applause rather proceeds from a kind of contagion caught up from others, and which we contribute to diffuse, than from what we privately feel. There are some subjects of which almost all the world perceive the futility; yet all combine in imposing them upon each other, as worthy of praise. But chiefly this imposition obtains in

literature, where men publicly condemn what they relish with rapture in private, and approve abroad what has given them disgust at home. The truth is, we deliver those criticisms in public which are supposed to be best calculated, not to do justice to the author, but to impress others with an opinion of our superior discernment.

But let works of this kind, which have already come off with such applause, enjoy it all. It is neither my wish to diminish, as I was never considerable enough to add to, their fame. But for the future, I fear there are many poems of which I shall find spirits to read but the title. In the first place, all odes upon winter, or summer, or autumn—in short, all odes, epodes, and monodies whatsoever—shall hereafter be deemed too polite, classical, obscure, and refined to be read, and entirely above human comprehension. Pastorals are pretty enough—for those that like them; but to me *Thyrsis* is one of the most insipid fellows I ever conversed with; and as for *Corydon*, I do not choose his company. Elegies and epistles are very fine to those to whom they are addressed; and as for epic poems, I am generally able to discover the whole plan in reading the two first pages.

Tragedies, however, as they are now made, are good, instructive moral sermons enough; and it would be a fault not to be pleased with good things. There I learn several great truths: as, that it is impossible to see into the ways of futurity; that

punishment always attends the villain; that love is the fond soother of the human breast; that we should not resist Heaven's will, for in resisting Heaven's will, Heaven's will is resisted; with several other sentiments equally new, delicate, and striking. Every new tragedy, therefore, I shall go to see; for reflections of this nature make a tolerable harmony, when mixed up with a proper quantity of drum, trumpet, thunder, lightning, or the scene-shifter's whistle. Adieu.

LETTER XCVIII

A DESCRIPTION OF THE COURTS OF JUSTICE IN WESTMINSTER HALL

*From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first president of the Cere-
monial Academy at Pekin, in China*

I HAD some intentions lately of going to visit Bedlam, the place where those who go mad are confined. I went to wait upon the Man in Black to be my conductor; but I found him preparing to go to Westminster Hall, where the English hold their courts of justice. It gave me some surprise to find my friend engaged in a lawsuit, but more so when he informed me that it had been depending for several years. "How is it possible," cried I, "for a man who knows the world to go to law? I am well acquainted with the courts of justice in China; they resemble rat-traps every one of them—nothing more easy than to get in, but to get out again is attended with some difficulty, and more cunning than rats are generally found to possess!"

"Faith!" replied my friend, "I should not have

gone to law but that I was assured of success before I began; things were presented to me in so alluring a light, that I thought by barely declaring myself a candidate for the prize, I had nothing more to do than to enjoy the fruits of the victory. Thus have I been upon the eve of an imaginary triumph every term these ten years; have travelled forward with victory ever in my view, but ever out of reach; however, at present, I fancy we have hampered our antagonist in such a manner that, without some unforeseen demur, we shall this day lay him fairly on his back."

"If things be so situated," said I, "I do not care if I attend you to the courts, and partake in the pleasure of your success. But prythee," continued I, as we set forward, "what reasons have you to think an affair at last concluded, which has given you so many former disappointments?" "My lawyer tells me," returned he, "that I have Salkeld and Ventris strong in my favour, and that there are no less than fifteen cases in point." "I understand," said I, "those are two of your judges who have already declared their opinions." "Pardon me," replied my friend, "Salkeld and Ventris are lawyers who, some hundred years ago, gave their opinions on cases similar to mine; these opinions, which make for me, my lawyer is to cite, and those opinions which look another way are cited by the lawyer employed by my antagonist; as I observed, I have Salkeld and Ventris for me, he has Coke and Hale

for him; and he that has most opinions is most likely to carry his cause." "But where is the necessity," cried I, "of prolonging a suit by citing the opinions and reports of others, since the same good sense which determined lawyers in former ages may serve to guide your judges at this day? They at that time gave their opinions only from the light of reason; your judges have the same light at present to direct them; let me even add, a greater, as in former ages there were many prejudices from which the present is happily free. If arguing from authorities be exploded from every other branch of learning, why should it be particularly adhered to in this? I plainly foresee how such a method of investigation must embarrass every suit, and even perplex the student; ceremonies will be multiplied, formalities must increase, and more time will thus be spent in learning the arts of litigation than in the discovery of right."

"I see," cries my friend, "that you are for a speedy administration of justice; but all the world will grant that the more time that is taken up in considering any subject, the better it will be understood. Besides, it is the boast of an Englishman that his property is secure, and all the world will grant that a deliberate administration of justice is the best way to secure his property. Why have we so many lawyers, but to secure our property? why so many formalities, but to secure our property? Not less than one hundred

thousand families live in opulence, elegance, and ease merely by securing our property."

"To embarrass justice," returned I, "by a multiplicity of laws, or to hazard it by a confidence in our judges, are, I grant, the opposite rocks on which legislative wisdom has ever split: in one case, the client resembles that emperor who is said to have been suffocated with the bed-clothes which were only designed to keep him warm; in the other, to that town which let the enemy take possession of its walls, in order to show the world how little they depended upon aught but courage for safety. But, bless me! what numbers do I see here—all in black—how is it possible that half this multitude find employment?" "Nothing so easily conceived," returned my companion; "they live by watching each other. For instance, the catchpole watches the man in debt, the attorney watches the catchpole, the counsellor watches the attorney, the solicitor the counsellor, and all find sufficient employment."—"I conceive you," interrupted I: "they watch each other, but it is the client that pays them all for watching. It puts me in mind of a Chinese fable, which is entitled, *Five Animals at a Meal*.

"A grasshopper, filled with dew, was merrily singing under a shade; a whangam, that eats grasshoppers, had marked it for its prey, and was just stretching forth to devour it; a serpent, that had for a long time fed only on whangams, was coiled up to fasten on the whangam; a yellow

bird was just upon the wing to dart upon the serpent; a hawk had just stooped from above to seize the yellow bird; all were intent on their prey, and unmindful of their danger: so the whangam ate the grasshopper, the serpent ate the whangam, the yellow bird the serpent, and the hawk the yellow bird; when, sousing from on high, a vulture gobbled up the hawk, grasshopper, whangam, and all in a moment."

I had scarce finished my fable, when the lawyer came to inform my friend that his cause was put off till another term, that money was wanted to retain, and that all the world was of opinion that the very next hearing would bring him off victorious. "If so, then," cries my friend, "I believe it will be my wisest way to continue the cause for another term—and, in the meantime, my friend here and I will go and see Bedlam." Adieu.

LETTER XCIX

A VISIT FROM THE LITTLE BEAU—THE INDULGENCE
WITH WHICH THE FAIR SEX ARE TREATED IN
SEVERAL PARTS OF ASIA

From the Same

I LATELY received a visit from the Little Beau, who I found had assumed a new flow of spirits with a new suit of clothes. Our discourse happened to turn upon the different treatment of the fair sex here and in Asia, with the influence of beauty in refining our manners, and improving our conversation.

I soon perceived he was strongly prejudiced in favour of the Asiatic method of treating the sex, and that it was impossible to persuade him but that a man was happier who had four wives at his command than he who had only one. "It is true," cries he, "your men of fashion in the East are slaves, and under some terrors of having their throats squeezed by a bow-string; but, what then? they can find ample consolation in a seraglio; they make, indeed, an indifferent figure in conversation

abroad, but then they have a seraglio to console them at home. I am told they have no balls, drums, nor operas, but then they have got a seraglio; they may be deprived of wine and French cookery, but they have a seraglio; a seraglio, a seraglio, my dear creature, wipes off every inconvenience in the world.

"Besides, I am told, your Asiatic beauties are the most convenient women alive, for they have no souls: positively there is nothing in nature I should like so much as ladies without souls; soul here is the utter ruin of half the sex. A girl of eighteen shall have soul enough to spend a hundred pounds in the turning of a trump. Her mother shall have soul enough to ride a sweep-stake match at an horse-race; her maiden aunt shall have soul enough to purchase the furniture of a whole toy-shop; and others shall have soul enough to behave as if they had no souls at all."

"With respect to the soul," interrupted I, "the Asiatics are much kinder to the fair sex than you imagine; instead of one soul, Fohi, the idol of China, gives every woman three; the Bramins give them fifteen; and even Mahomet himself nowhere excludes the sex from paradise. Abulfeda¹ reports that, an old woman one day importuning him, to know what she ought to do in order to gain paradise—'My good lady,' answered the prophet,

¹ Ismael Abulfeda, a learned geographer and historian, born at Damascus in 1273; died 1331. His *Life of Mahomet* was printed at Oxford in 1723.

'old women never get there.' 'What! never get to paradise!' returned the matron, in a fury. 'Never,' says he, 'for they always grow young by the way.'

"No, Sir," continued I, "the men of Asia behave with more deference to the sex than you seem to imagine. As you of Europe say grace upon sitting down to dinner, so it is the custom in China to say grace when a man goes to bed to his wife." "And may I die," returned my companion, "but it is a very pretty ceremony; for, seriously, Sir, I see no reason why a man should not be as grateful in one situation as in the other. Upon honour, I always find myself much more disposed to gratitude on the couch of a fine woman than upon sitting down to a sirloin of beef."

"Another ceremony," said I, resuming the conversation, "in favour of the sex amongst us, is the bride's being allowed after marriage her three days of freedom. During this interval, a thousand extravagancies are practiced by either sex. The lady is placed upon the nuptial bed, and numberless monkey tricks are played round to divert her. One gentleman smells her perfumed handkerchief, another attempts to untie her garters, a third pulls off her shoe to play hunt the slipper, another pretends to be an idiot, and endeavours to raise a laugh by grimacing; in the meantime the glass goes briskly about, till ladies, gentlemen, wife, husband, and all are mixed together in one inundation of arrack punch."

"Strike me dumb, deaf, and blind." cried my companion, "but that's very pretty! There's some sense in your Chinese ladies' condescensions; but among us, you shall scarcely find one of the whole sex that shall hold her good-humour for three days together. No later than yesterday I happened to say some civil things to a citizen's wife of my acquaintance, not because I loved, but because I had charity; and what do you think was the tender creature's reply? Only that she detested my pig-tail wig, high-heeled shoes, and sallow complexion! That is all! Nothing more! Yes, by the heavens, though she was more ugly than an unpainted actress, I found her more insolent than a thoroughbred woman of quality."

He was proceeding in this wild manner, when his invective was interrupted by the Man in Black, who entered the apartment, introducing his niece, a young lady of exquisite beauty. Her very appearance was sufficient to silence the severest satirist of the sex; easy without pride and free without impudence, she seemed capable of supplying every sense with pleasure; her looks, her conversation, were natural and unconstrained; she had neither been taught to languish nor ogle, to laugh without a jest, or sigh without sorrow. I found that she had just returned from abroad, and had been conversant in the manners of the world. Curiosity prompted me to ask several questions, but she declined them all. I own I

never found myself so strongly prejudiced in favour of apparent merit before: and could willingly have produced our conversation, but the company after some time withdrew. Just, however, before the Little Beau took his leave he called me aside, and requested I would change him a twenty pound bill; which as I was incapable of doing, he was contented with borrowing half-a-crown. Adieu.

LETTER C

A LIFE OF INDEPENDENCE PRAISED

From Lien Chi Altangi to Hingpo, by the way of Moscow

FEW virtues have been more praised by moralists than generosity: every practical treatise of ethics tends to increase our sensibility of the distresses of others, and to relax the grasp of frugality. Philosophers that are poor praise it because they are gainers by its effects; and the opulent Seneca himself has written a treatise on benefits, though he was known to give nothing away.¹

¹ "A better moralist than Seneca hath said, 'He who maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.' This was notoriously our philosopher's case. Juvenal gives him the epithet of *prædives*. Dio attributes the insurrection of the Britons in a great measure to his avarice and rapacity; and P. Suilius appears, from Tacitus, to have attacked him on this head, with a violence which no common arts of enriching himself could have provoked—'By what system of ethics has this professor, in less than four years, amassed three hundred million sesterces? His snares are spread through all the city; last wills and testaments are his quarry, and the rich who have no children, are his prey. Italy is overwhelmed, the provinces are exhausted; and he is still unsatisfied.'"—GIFFORD, *Juvenal*, vol. i., p. 355.

But, among the many who have enforced the duty of giving, I am surprised there are none to inculcate the ignominy of receiving; to show that by every favour we accept we in some measure forfeit our native freedom; and that a state of continual dependence on the generosity of others is a life of gradual debasement.

Were men taught to despise the receiving obligations with the same force of reasoning and declamation that they are instructed to confer them, we might then see every person in society filling up the requisite duties of his station with cheerful industry, neither relaxed by hope nor sullen from disappointment.

Every favour a man receives in some measure sinks him below his dignity; and in proportion to the value of the benefit, or the frequency of its acceptance, he gives up so much of his natural independence. He, therefore, who thrives upon the unmerited bounty of another, if he has any sensibility, suffers the worst of servitude; the shackled slave may murmur without reproach, but the humble dependant is taxed with ingratitude upon every symptom of discontent: the one may rave round the walls of his cell, but the other lingers in all the silence of mental confinement. To increase his distress, every new obligation but adds to the former load which kept the vigorous mind from rising; till at last, elastic no longer, it shapes itself to constraint, and puts on habitual servility.

It is thus with the feeling mind; but there are some who, born without any share of sensibility, receive favour after favour, and still cringe for more; who accept the offer of generosity with as little reluctance as the wages of merit, and even make thanks for past benefits an indirect petition for new; such, I grant, can suffer no debasement from dependence, since they were originally as vile as was possible to be: dependence degrades only the ingenuous, but leaves the sordid mind in pristine meanness. In this manner, therefore, long-continued generosity is misplaced, or it is injurious; it either finds a man worthless, or it makes him so; and true it is that the person who is contented to be often obliged ought not to have been obliged at all.

Yet, while I describe the meanness of a life of continued dependence, I would not be thought to include those natural or political subordinations which subsist in every society; for in such, though dependence is exacted from the inferior, yet the obligation on either side is mutual. The son must rely upon his parent for support, but the parent lies under the same obligations to give, that the other has to expect; the subordinate officer must receive the commands of his superior, but for this obedience the former has a right to demand an intercourse of favour. Such is not the dependence I would depreciate, but that where every expected favour must be the result of mere benevolence in the giver; where the benefit can

be kept without remorse, or transferred without injustice. The character of a legacy-hunter, for instance, is detestable in some countries, and despicable in all; this universal contempt of a man who infringes upon none of the laws of society, some moralists have arraigned as a popular and unjust prejudice; never considering the necessary degradations a wretch must undergo who previously expects to grow rich by benefits, without having either natural or social claims to enforce his petitions.

But this intercourse of benefaction and acknowledgment is often injurious, even to the giver as well as the receiver. A man can gain but little knowledge of himself, or of the world, amidst a circle of those whom hope or gratitude has gathered round him; their unceasing humiliations must necessarily increase his comparative magnitude, for all men measure their own abilities by those of their company: thus, being taught to overrate his merit, he in reality lessens it; increasing in confidence, but not in power, his professions end in empty boast, his undertakings in shameful disappointment.

It is perhaps one of the severest misfortunes of the great that they are, in general, obliged to live among men whose real virtue is lessened by dependence, and whose minds are enslaved by obligation. The humble companion may have at first accepted patronage with generous views; but soon he feels the mortifying influence of

conscious inferiority, by degrees sinks into a flatterer, and from flattery at last degenerates into stupid veneration. To remedy this, the great often dismiss their old dependants, and take new. Such changes are falsely imputed to levity, falsehood, or caprice in the patron, since they may be more justly ascribed to the client's gradual deterioration.

No, my son, a life of independence is generally a life of virtue. It is that which fits the soul for every generous flight of humanity, freedom, and friendship. To give should be our pleasure, but to receive our shame; serenity, health, and affluence attend the desire of rising by labour; misery, repentance, and disrespect, that of succeeding by extorted benevolence. The man who can thank himself alone for the happiness he enjoys is truly blest; and lovely, far more lovely the sturdy gloom of laborious indigence than the fawning simper of thriving adulation. Adieu.

LETTER CI

THE PEOPLE MUST BE CONTENTED TO BE GUIDED
BY THOSE WHOM THEY HAVE APPOINTED TO
GOVERN—A STORY TO THIS EFFECT

*From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first president of the Cere-
monial Academy at Pekin, in China*

I N every society some men are born to teach, and others to receive instruction; some to work, and others to enjoy in idleness the fruits of their industry; some to govern, and others to obey. Every people, how free so ever, must be contented to give up part of their liberty and judgment to those who govern, in exchange for their hopes of security; and the motives which first influenced their choice in the election of their governors, should ever be weighed against the succeeding apparent inconsistencies of their conduct. All cannot be rulers, and men are generally best governed by a few. In making way through the intricacies of business, the smallest obstacles are apt to retard the execution of what is to be planned by a multiplicity of counsels; the judgment of

one alone being always fittest for winding through the labyrinths of intrigue, and the obstructions of disappointment. A serpent, which, as the fable observes, is furnished with one head and many tails, is much more capable of subsistence and expedition than another which is furnished with but one tail and many heads.

Obvious as these truths are, the people of this country seem insensible of their force. Not satisfied with the advantages of internal peace and opulence, they still murmur at their governors, and interfere in the execution of their designs; as if they wanted to be something more than happy. But as the Europeans instruct by argument, and the Asiatics mostly by narration, were I to address them, I should convey my sentiments in the following story:—

“Takupi had long been Prime Minister of Tipartala, a fertile country that stretches along the western confines of China. During his administration, whatever advantages could be derived from arts, learning, and commerce were seen to bless the people; nor were the necessary precautions of providing for the security of the state forgotten. It often happens, however, that when men are possessed of all they want they then begin to find torment from imaginary afflictions, and lessen their present enjoyments, by foreboding that those enjoyments are to have an end. The people now, therefore, endeavoured to find out grievances; and, after some search,

actually began to think themselves aggrieved. A petition against the enormities of Takupi was carried to the throne in due form; and the Queen who governed the country, willing to satisfy her subjects, appointed a day in which his accusers should be heard, and the minister should stand upon his defence.

“The day being arrived, and the minister brought before the tribunal, a carrier, who supplied the city with fish, appeared among the number of his accusers. He exclaimed, that it was the custom, time immemorial, for carriers to bring their fish upon an horse in a hamper; which, being placed on one side, and balanced by a stone on the other, was thus conveyed with ease and safety; but that the prisoner, moved either by a spirit of innovation, or perhaps bribed by the hamper-makers, had obliged all carriers to use the stone no longer, but balance one hamper with another—an order entirely repugnant to the customs of all antiquity, and those of the kingdom of Tipartala in particular.

“The carrier finished; and the whole court shook their heads at the innovating minister: when a second witness appeared. He was inspector of the city buildings, and accused the disgraced favourite of having given orders for the demolition of an ancient ruin, which obstructed the passage through one of the principal streets. He observed that such buildings were noble monuments of barbarous antiquity; contributed finely to show

how little their ancestors understood of architecture; and for that reason such monuments should be held sacred, and suffered gradually to decay.

“The last witness now appeared. This was a widow, who had laudably attempted to burn herself upon her husband’s funeral pile. But the innovating minister had prevented the execution of her design, and was insensible to her tears, protestations, and entreaties.

“The Queen could have pardoned the two former offences; but this last was considered as so gross an injury to the sex, and so directly contrary to all the customs of antiquity, that it called for immediate justice. ‘What,’ cried the Queen, ‘not suffer a woman to burn herself when she thinks proper? The sex are to be very prettily tutored, no doubt, if they must be restrained from entertaining their female friends now and then with a fried wife, or roasted acquaintance. I sentence the criminal to be banished my presence for ever, for his injurious treatment of the sex.’

“Takupi had been hitherto silent, and spoke only to show the sincerity of his resignation. ‘Great Queen,’ cried he, ‘I acknowledge my crime, and since I am to be banished, I beg it may be to some ruined town or desolate village in the country I have governed. I shall find some pleasure in improving the soil, and bringing back a spirit of industry among the inhabitants.’ His request appearing reasonable, it was immediately

complied with; and a courtier had orders to fix upon a place of banishment, answering the minister's description. After some months' search, however, the inquiry proved fruitless; neither a desolate village nor a ruined town was found in the whole kingdom. 'Alas!' said Takupi then to the Queen, 'how can that country be ill-governed which has neither a desolate village nor a ruined town in it?' The Queen perceived the justice of his expostulation, and the minister was received into more than former favour."

LETTER CII

THE PASSION FOR GAMING AMONG LADIES RIDICULED

From the Same

THE ladies here are by no means such ardent gamesters as the women of Asia. In this respect I must do the English justice; for I love to praise where applause is justly merited. Nothing is more common in China than to see two women of fashion continue gaming till one has won all the other's clothes, and stripped her quite naked; the winner thus marching off in a double suit of finery, and the loser shrinking behind in the primitive simplicity of nature.

No doubt, you remember when Shang, our maiden aunt, played with a sharper. First her money went; then her trinkets were produced; her clothes followed, piece by piece, soon after; when she had thus played herself quite naked, being a woman of spirit, and willing to pursue her own, she staked her teeth. Fortune was against her even here, and her teeth followed her clothes: at last, she played for her left eye, and,

O hard fate! this, too, she lost; however, she had the consolation of biting the sharper, for he never perceived that it was made of glass till it became his own.

How happy, my friend, are the English ladies, who never rise to such an inordinance of passion! Though the sex here are naturally fond of games of chance, and are taught to manage games of skill from their infancy, yet they never pursue ill-fortune with such amazing intrepidity. Indeed, I may entirely acquit them of ever playing—I mean, of playing for their eyes or their teeth.

It is true, they often stake their fortune, their beauty, health, and reputations, at a gaming-table. It even sometimes happens that they play their husbands into a gaol; yet still they preserve a decorum unknown to our wives and daughters of China. I have been present at a rout in this country where a woman of fashion, after losing her money, has sat writhing in all the agonies of bad luck; and yet, after all, never once attempted to strip a single petticoat, or cover the board, as her last stake, with her head clothes.

However, though I praise their moderation at play, I must not conceal their assiduity. In China, our women, except upon some great day, are never permitted to finger a dice-box; but here every day seems to be a festival; and night itself, which gives others rest, only serves to increase the female gamester's industry. I have been told of an old lady in the country, who, being given



over by the physicians, played with the curate of her parish to pass the time away; having won all his money, she next proposed playing for her funeral charges; the proposal was accepted, but, unfortunately, the lady expired just as she had taken in her game.

There are some passions which, though differently pursued, are attended with equal consequences in every country. Here they game with more perseverance, there with greater fury; here they strip their families, there they strip themselves naked. A lady in China, who indulges a passion for gaming, often becomes a drunkard; and by flourishing a dice-box in one hand, she generally comes to brandish a dram-cup in the other. Far be it from me to say there are any who drink drams in England; but it is natural to suppose that when a lady has lost everything else but her honour she will be apt to toss that into the bargain, and, grown insensible to nicer feelings, behave like the Spaniard, who, when all his money was gone, endeavoured to borrow more by offering to pawn his whiskers. Adieu.

LETTER CIII

THE CHINESE PHILOSOPHER BEGINS TO THINK OF QUITTING ENGLAND

*From Lien Chi Altangi to * * *, Merchant in Amsterdam*

I HAVE just received a letter from my son, in which he informs me of the fruitlessness of his endeavours to recover the lady with whom he fled from Persia. He strives to cover, under the appearance of fortitude, a heart torn with anxiety and disappointment. I have offered little consolation, since that but too frequently feeds the sorrow which it pretends to deplore, and strengthens the impression, which nothing but the external rubs of time and accident can thoroughly efface.

He informs me of his intention of quitting Moscow the first opportunity, and travelling by land to Amsterdam. I must, therefore, upon his arrival, entreat the continuance of your friendship, and beg of you to provide him with proper directions for finding me in London. You can scarcely be sensible of the joy I expect upon seeing,

him once more: the ties between the father and the son among us of China are much more closely drawn than with you of Europe.

The remittances sent me from Argun to Moscow came in safety. I cannot sufficiently admire that spirit of honesty which prevails through the whole country of Siberia: perhaps the savages of that desolate region are the only untutored people of the globe that cultivate the moral virtues, even without knowing that their actions merit praise. I have been told surprising things of their goodness, benevolence, and generosity; and the uninterrupted commerce between China and Russia serves as a collateral confirmation.

“Let us,” says the Chinese law-giver, “admire the rude virtues of the ignorant, but rather imitate the delicate morals of the polite.” In the country where I reside, though honesty and benevolence be not so congenial, yet art supplies the place of nature. Though here every vice is carried to excess, yet every virtue is practised also with unexampled superiority. A city like this is the soil for great virtues and great vices; the villain can soon improve here in the deepest mysteries of deceiving; and the practical philosopher can every day meet new incitements to mend his honest intentions. There are no pleasures, sensual or sentimental, which this city does not produce; yet, I know not how, I could not be content to reside here for life. There is something so seducing in that spot in which we first had

existence that nothing but it can please. Whatever vicissitudes we experience in life, however we toil, or wheresoever we wander, our fatigued wishes still recur to home for tranquillity: we long to die in that spot which gave us birth, and in that pleasing expectation opiate every calamity.

You now, therefore, perceive that I have some intentions of leaving this country; and yet my designed departure fills me with reluctance and regret. Though the friendships of travellers are generally more transient than vernal snows, still I feel an uneasiness at breaking the connexions I have formed since my arrival; particularly, I shall have no small pain in leaving my usual companion, guide, and instructor.

I shall wait for the arrival of my son before I set out. He shall be my companion in every intended journey for the future; in his company I can support the fatigues of the way with redoubled ardour, pleased at once with conveying instruction and exacting obedience. Adieu.

CHAPTER CIV

THE ARTS SOME MAKE USE OF TO APPEAR LEARNED

From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first president of the Ceremonial Academy at Peking

OUR scholars of China have a most profound veneration for forms. A first-rate beauty never studied the decorums of dress with more assiduity; they may properly enough be said to be clothed with wisdom from head to foot; they have their philosophical caps and philosophical whiskers, their philosophical slippers and philosophical fans; there is even a philosophical standard for measuring the nails; and yet, with all this seeming wisdom, they are often found to be mere empty pretenders.

A philosophical beau is not so frequent in Europe; yet I am told that such characters are found here. I mean such as punctually support all the decorums of learning, without being really very profound, or naturally possessed of a fine understanding: who labour hard to obtain the titular honours attending literary merit, who

flatter others, in order to be flattered in turn, and only study to be thought students.

A character of this kind generally receives company in his study, in all the pensive formality of slippers, night-gown, and easy chair. The table is covered with a large book, which is always kept open, and never read; his solitary hours being dedicated to dozing, mending pens, feeling his pulse, peeping through the microscope, and sometimes reading amusing books, which he condemns in company. His library is preserved with the most religious neatness, and is generally a repository of scarce books, which bear a high price, because too dull or useless to become common by the ordinary methods of publication.

Such men are generally candidates for admittance into literary clubs, academies, and institutions, where they regularly meet to give and receive a little instruction, and a great deal of praise. In conversation they never betray ignorance, because they never seem to receive information. Offer a new observation, they have heard it before; pinch them in an argument, and they reply with a sneer.

Yet, how trifling soever these little arts may appear, they answer one valuable purpose, of gaining the practisers the esteem they wish for. The bounds of a man's knowledge are easily concealed, if he has but prudence; but all can readily see and admire a gilt library, a set of

long nails, a silver standish, or a well-combed whisker, who are incapable of distinguishing a dunce.

When Father Matthew,¹ the first European missionary, entered China, the court was informed that he possessed great skill in astronomy; he was therefore sent for, and examined. The established astronomers of state undertook this task; and made their report to the emperor that his skill was but very superficial, and no way comparable to their own. The missionary, however, appealed from their judgment to experience, and challenged them to calculate an eclipse of the moon that was to happen a few nights following. "What!" said some, "shall a barbarian without nails pretend to vie with men in astronomy, who have made it the study of their lives; with men who know half the knowable characters of words, who wear scientific caps and slippers, and who have gone through every literary degree with applause?" They accepted the challenge, confident of success. The eclipse began: the Chinese produced a most splendid apparatus, and were fifteen minutes wrong; the missionary, with a single

¹ Father Matthew Ricci, who may justly be considered as the founder of the Catholic mission to China, was born at Macerata in 1552. By his intimate knowledge of the mathematical and experimental sciences, he had the means of making friends and converts. He was much esteemed by the emperor, and was permitted to build a church at Pekin; where he died in 1610, leaving behind him some valuable memoirs respecting China, which have been made use of by Père Frigault, in his history of that empire.—See MORERI, and DAVIS's *Chinese*, vol. i., p. 30.

instrument, was exact to a second. This was convincing, but the court astronomers were not to be convinced: instead of acknowledging their error, they assured the emperor that their calculations were certainly exact, but that the stranger without nails had actually bewitched the moon. "Well, then," cries the good emperor, smiling at their ignorance, "you shall still continue to be servants of the moon; but I constitute this man her controller."

China is thus replete with men whose only pretensions to knowledge arise from external circumstances; and in Europe every country abounds with them in proportion to its ignorance. Spain and Flanders, who are behind the rest of Europe in learning at least three centuries, have twenty literary titles and marks of distinction unknown in France or England: they have their *Clarissimi* and *Præclarissimi*, their *Accuratissimi* and *Minutissimi*; a round cap entitles one student to argue, and a square cap permits another to teach; while a cap with a tassel almost sanctifies the head it happens to cover. But, where true knowledge is cultivated, these formalities begin to disappear; the ermined cowl, the solemn beard, and the sweeping train are laid aside; philosophers dress, and talk, and think like other men; and lamb-skin-dressers, and cap-makers, and tail-carriers, now deplore a literary age.

For my own part, my friend, I have seen enough of presuming ignorance never to venerate wisdom

but where it actually appears. I have received literary titles and distinctions myself; and, by the quantity of my own wisdom, know how very little wisdom they can confer. Adieu.

LETTER CV

THE INTENDED CORONATION DESCRIBED

From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first president of the Ceremonial Academy at Peking

THE time for the young king's coronation¹ approaches: the great and the little world look forward with impatience. A knight from the country, who has brought up his family to see and be seen on this occasion, has taken all the lower part of the house where I lodge. His wife is laying in a large quantity of silks, which the mercer tells her are to be fashionable next season; and miss, her daughter, has actually had her ears bored previously to the ceremony. In all this bustle of preparation I am considered as mere lumber, and have been shoved up two stories higher, to make room for others my landlady seems perfectly convinced are my betters; but

¹ That of George III. on the 22nd September, 1761. This paper originally appeared in the *Public Ledger*. Goldsmith wrote three more papers on this subject—see Essays xxvi. and xxvii. of *Collected Essays*, and Essay xi. among *Unacknowledged Essays*—all in Vol. VII. of this edition

whom, before me, she is contented with only calling very good company.

The Little Beau, who has now forced himself into my intimacy, was yesterday giving me a minute detail of the intended procession. All men are eloquent upon their favourite topic; and this seemed peculiarly adapted to the size and turn of his understanding. His whole mind was blazoned over with a variety of glittering images: coronets, escutcheons, lace, fringe, tassels, stones, bugles, and spun glass. "Here," cried he, "Garter is to walk; and there Rouge Dragon marches with the escutcheons on his back. Here Clarencieux moves forward; and there Blue Mantle disdains to be left behind. Here the Aldermen march two and two; and there the undaunted Champion of England, no way terrified at the very numerous appearance of gentlemen and ladies, rides forward in complete armour, and, with an intrepid air, throws down his glove. Ah!" continued he, "should any be so hardy as to take up that fatal glove, and so accept the challenge, we should see fine sport; the Champion would shew him no mercy; he would soon teach him all his passes, with a witness. However, I am afraid we shall have none willing to try it with him upon the approaching occasion, for two reasons: first, because his antagonist would stand a chance of being killed in the single combat; and secondly, because, if he escapes the Champion's arm, he would certainly be hanged for treason. No, no; I fancy

none will be so hardy as to dispute it with a Champion like him, inured to arms; and we shall probably see him prancing unmolested away, holding his bridle thus in one hand, and brandishing his dram-cup in the other."

Some men have a manner of describing which only wraps the subject in more than former obscurity; thus was I unable, with all my companion's volubility, to form a distinct idea of the intended procession. I was certain that the inauguration of a king should be conducted with solemnity and religious awe; and I could not be persuaded that there was much solemnity in this description. If this be true, cried I to myself, the people of Europe surely have a strange manner of mixing solemn and fantastic images together; pictures at once replete with burlesque and the sublime. At a time when the king enters into the most solemn compact with his people nothing surely should be admitted to diminish from the real majesty of the ceremony. A ludicrous image brought in at such a time throws an air of ridicule upon the whole. It some way resembles a picture I have seen, designed by Albert Dürer, where, amidst all the solemnity of that awful scene, a deity judging, and a trembling world awaiting the decree, he has introduced a merry mortal trundling his scolding wife to hell in a wheel-barrow.

My companion, who mistook my silence, during this interval of reflection, for the rapture of as-

tonishment, proceeded to describe those frivolous parts of the show that most struck his imagination, and to assure me that, if I staid in this country some months longer, I should see fine things. "For my own part," continued he, "I know already of fifteen suits of clothes that would stand on one end with gold lace, all designed to be first shown there; and as for diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and pearls, we shall see them as thick as brass nails in a sedan-chair. And then we are all to walk so majestically, thus: this foot always behind the foot before. The ladies are to fling nosegays; the court poets to scatter verses; the spectators are to be all in full dress; Mrs. Tibbs in a new sacque, ruffles, and frenched hair—look where you will, one thing finer than another! Mrs. Tibbs curtsies to the Duchess; her grace returns the compliment with a bow. 'Largess,' cries the Herald. 'Make room,' cries the Gentleman Usher. 'Knock him down,' cries the guard. Ah!" continued he, amazed at his own description, "what an astonishing scene of grandeur can art produce from the smallest circumstance, when it thus actually turns to wonder one man putting on another man's hat!"

I now found his mind was entirely set upon the fopperies of the pageant, and quite regardless of the real meaning of such costly preparations. "Pageants," says Bacon, "are pretty things; but we should rather study to make them elegant than expensive." Processions, cavalcades, and all that fund of gay frippery, furnished out by

tailors, barbers, and tire-women, mechanically influence the mind into veneration; an emperor in his night-cap would not meet with half the respect of an emperor with a glittering crown. Politics resemble religion: attempting to divest either of ceremony is the most certain method of bringing either into contempt. The weak must have their inducements to admiration as well as the wise; and it is the business of a sensible government to impress all ranks with a sense of subordination, whether this be effected by a diamond buckle or a virtuous edict, a sumptuary law or a glass necklace.

This interval of reflection only gave my companion spirits to begin his description afresh; and, as a greater inducement to raise my curiosity, he informed me of the vast sums that were given by the spectators for places. "That the ceremony must be fine," cries he, "is very evident from the fine price that is paid for seeing it. Several ladies have assured me they would willingly part with one eye rather than be prevented from looking on with the other. Come, come," continues he, "I have a friend who, for my sake, will supply us with places at the most reasonable rates; I'll take care you shall not be imposed upon; and he will inform you of the use, finery, rapture, splendour, and enchantment of the whole ceremony better than I."

Follies often repeated lose their absurdity, and assume the appearance of reason. His arguments were so often and so strongly enforced, that I had

actually some thoughts of becoming a spectator. We accordingly went together to bespeak a place; but guess my surprise when the man demanded a purse of gold for a single seat! I could hardly believe him serious upon making the demand. "Prithee, friend," cried I, "after I have paid twenty pounds for sitting here an hour or two, can I bring a part of the coronation back?" "No, Sir." "How long can I live upon it after I have come?" "Not long, Sir." "Can a coronation clothe, feed, or fatten me?" "Sir," replied the man, "you seem to be under a mistake; all that you can bring away is the pleasure of having it to say that you saw the coronation." "Blast me!" cries Tibbs, "if that be all, there is no need of paying for that, since I am resolved to have that pleasure, whether I am there or no!"

I am conscious, my friend, that this is but a very confused description of the intended ceremony. You may object that I neither settle rank, precedency, nor place; that I seem ignorant whether Gules walks before or behind Garter, that I have neither mentioned the dimensions of a lord's cap, nor measured the length of a lady's tail. I know your delight is in minute description, and this I am unhappily disqualified from furnishing; yet, upon the whole, I fancy it will be no way comparable to the magnificence of our late Emperor Whangti's procession, when he was married to the moon, at which Fum Hoam himself presided in person. Adieu.

LETTER CVI

FUNERAL ELEGIES WRITTEN UPON THE GREAT
RIDICULED—A SPECIMEN OF ONE

To the Same

IT was formerly the custom here, when men of distinction died, for their surviving acquaintance to throw each a slight present into the grave. Several things of little value were made use of for that purpose: perfumes, reliques, spices, bitter herbs, camomile, wormwood, and verses. This custom, however, is almost discontinued, and nothing but verses alone are now lavished on such occasions—an oblation which they suppose may be interred with the dead without any injury to the living.

Upon the death of the great, therefore, the poets and undertakers are sure of employment. While one provides the long cloak, black staff, and mourning coach, the other produces the pastoral or elegy, the monody or apotheosis. The nobility need be under no apprehensions, but die as fast as they think proper, the poet and

undertaker are ready to supply them; these can find metaphorical tears and family escutcheons at half-an-hour's warning; and when the one has soberly laid the body in the grave, the other is ready to fix it figuratively among the stars.

There are several ways of being poetically sorrowful on such occasions. The bard is now some pensive youth of science, who sits deploring among the tombs; again, he is Thyrsis complaining in a circle of harmless sheep. Now Britannia sits upon her own shore, and gives a loose to maternal tenderness: at another time, Parnassus, even the mountain Parnassus, gives way to sorrow, and is bathed in tears of distress.

But the most usual manner is this: Damon meets Menalcas, who has got a most gloomy countenance. The shepherd asks his friend, Whence that look of distress? to which the other replies that Pollio is no more. "If that be the case, then," cries Damon, "let us retire to yonder bower at some distance off, where the cypress and the jessamine add fragrance to the breeze; and let us weep alternately for Pollio, the friend of shepherds and the patron of every muse." "Ah," returns his fellow shepherd, "what think you rather of that grotto by the fountain side? the murmuring stream will help to assist our complaints, and a nightingale on a neighbouring tree will join her voice to the concert." When the place is thus settled, they begin: the brook stands still to hear their lamentations, the cows forget to graze; and the very tigers

start from the forest with sympathetic concern. By the tombs of our ancestors, my dear Fum, I am quite unaffected in all this distress: the whole is liquid laudanum to my spirits; and a tiger of common sensibility has twenty times more tenderness than I.¹

But, though I could never weep with the complaining shepherd, yet I am sometimes induced to pity the poet, whose trade is thus to make demigods and heroes for a dinner. There is not in nature a more dismal figure than a man who sits down to premeditated flattery: every stanza he writes tacitly reproaches the meanness of his occupation, till at last his stupidity becomes more stupid, and his dulness more diminutive.

I am amazed, therefore, that none have yet found out the secret of flattering the worthless and yet of preserving a safe conscience. I have often wished for some method by which a man might do himself and his deceased patron justice

¹ "In his amorous effusions he [Prior] is less happy; for they are not dictated by nature or by passion, and have neither gallantry nor tenderness. They have the coldness of Cowley, without his wit, the dull exercises of a skilful versifier, resolved at all adventures to write something about Chloe, and trying to be amorous by dint of study. His fictions therefore are mythological. Venus, after the example of the Greek epigram, asks when she was seen *naked and bathing*. Then *Cupid* is *mistaken*; then *Cupid* is *disarmed*; then he loses his darts to *Ganymede*; then *Jupiter* sends him a summons by *Mercury*. Then *Chloe* goes a hunting, with an *ivory quiver graceful at her side*; Diana mistakes her for one of her nymphs, and Cupid laughs at the blunder. All this is surely despicable; and even when he tries to act the lover, without the help of gods or goddesses, his thoughts are unaffecting or remote. He talks not 'like a man of this world.' "—JOHNSON'S *Life of Prior*.

without being under the hateful reproach of self-conviction. After long lucubration, I have hit upon such an expedient; and sent you the specimen of a poem upon the decease of a great man, in which the flattery is perfectly fine, and yet the poet perfectly innocent.

*On the death of the Right Honourable * * * *1*

Ye muses, pour the pitying tear
For Pollio snatch'd away:
O had he liv'd another year!
——*He had not died to-day.*

O were ye born to bless mankind
In virtuous times of yore,
Heroes themselves had fallen behind!
——*Whene'er he went before.*

How sad the groves and plains appear,
And sympathetic sheep:
E'en pitying hills would drop a tear:
——*If hills could learn to weep.*

His bounty in exalted strain
Each bard might well display,
Since none implor'd relief in vain!
——*That went reliev'd away.*

And hark! I hear the tuneful throng
His obsequies forbid;
He still shall live, shall live as long
——*As ever dead man did.*

¹ Written in the same style of humour as his *Elegy on Mrs. Mary Blaize*, Vol. I., p. 137.

LETTER CVII

THE ENGLISH TOO FOND OF BELIEVING EVERY
REPORT WITHOUT EXAMINATION—A STORY OF
AN INCENDIARY TO THIS PURPOSE

To the Same

IT is the most usual method in every report first to examine its probability, and then act as the conjuncture may require. The English, however, exert a different spirit in such circumstances; they first act, and when too late, begin to examine. From a knowledge of this disposition, there are several here who make it their business to frame new reports at every convenient interval, all tending to denounce ruin, both on their contemporaries and their posterity. This denunciation is eagerly caught up by the public: away they fling to propagate the distress; sell out at one place, buy in at another, grumble at their governors, shout in mobs, and when they have thus for some time behaved like fools, sit down coolly to argue and talk wisdom, to puzzle each other with syllogism, and prepare for the

next report that prevails, which is always attended with the same success.

Thus are they ever rising above one report only to sink into another. They resemble a dog in a well, pawing to get free. When he has raised his upper parts above water, and every spectator imagines him disengaged, his lower parts drag him down again, and sink him to the nose; he makes new efforts to emerge, and every effort, increasing his weakness, only tends to sink him the deeper.

There are some here who, I am told, make a tolerable subsistence by the credulity of their countrymen. As they find the public fond of blood, wounds, and death, they contrive political ruins suited to every month in the year. This month the people are to be eaten up by the French in flat-bottomed boats; the next by the soldiers, designed to beat the French back. Now the people are going to jump down the gulf of luxury; and now nothing but a herring subscription can fish them up again.¹ Time passes on; the report proves false; new circumstances produce new changes; but the people never change—they are persevering in folly.

In other countries, those boding politicians would be left to fret over their own schemes alone, and grow splenetic without hopes of infecting others, but England seems to be the very region

¹ See p. 281, and Vol. VI., p. 265, No. VI. of *The Bee*, "On the Instability of Worldly Grandeur."

where spleen delights to dwell; a man not only can give an unbounded scope to the disorder in himself, but may, if he pleases, propagate it over the whole kingdom, with a certainty of success. He has only to cry out that the government, the government is all wrong; that their schemes are leading to ruin; that Britons are no more: every good member of the commonwealth thinks it his duty, in such a case, to deplore the universal decadence with sympathetic sorrow, and, by fancying the constitution in a decay, absolutely to impair its vigour.

This people would laugh at my simplicity should I advise them to be less sanguine in harbouring gloomy predictions, and examine coolly before they attempted to complain. I have just heard a story which, though transacted in a private family, serves very well to describe the behaviour of the whole nation, in cases of threatened calamity. As there are public, so there are private incendiaries here. One of the last, either for the amusement of his friends, or to divert a fit of the spleen, lately sent a threatening letter to a worthy family in my neighbourhood, to this effect:

“SIR:—Knowing you to be very rich, and finding myself to be very poor, I think proper to inform you that I have learned the secret of poisoning man, woman, and child, without danger of detection. Don’t be uneasy, Sir: you may take your choice of being poisoned in a fortnight, or poisoned in a month, or poisoned in six weeks; you shall

have full time to settle all your affairs. Though I am poor, I love to do things like a gentleman. But, Sir, you must die; I have determined it within my own breast that you must die. Blood, Sir, blood is my trade; so I could wish you would this day six weeks take leave of your friends, wife, and family, for I cannot possibly allow you longer time. To convince you more certainly of the power of my art, by which you may know I speak truth, take this letter; when you have read it, tear off the seal, fold it up, and give it to your favourite Dutch mastiff that sits by the fire; he will swallow it, Sir, like a buttered toast; in three hours four minutes after he has taken it, he will attempt to bite off his own tongue, and half an hour after burst asunder in twenty pieces. Blood! blood! blood! So no more at present from, Sir, your most obedient, most devoted humble servant to command, till death."

You may easily imagine the consternation into which this letter threw the whole good-natured family. The poor man to whom it was addressed was the more surprised, as not knowing how he could merit such inveterate malice. All the friends of the family were convened; it was universally agreed that it was a most terrible affair, and that the government should be solicited to offer a reward and a pardon: a fellow of this kind would go on poisoning family after family; and it was impossible to say where the destruction would end. In pursuance of these determinations,

the government was applied to; strict search was made after the incendiary, but all in vain. At last, therefore, they recollected that the experiment was not yet tried upon the dog; the Dutch mastiff was brought up, and placed in the midst of the friends and relations, the seal was torn off, the packet folded up with care, and soon they found, to the great surprise of all—that the dog would not eat the letter. Adieu.

LETTER CVIII

THE UTILITY AND ENTERTAINMENT THAT MIGHT
RESULT FROM A JOURNEY INTO THE EAST ¹

To the Same

I HAVE frequently been amazed at the ignorance of almost all the European travellers who have penetrated any considerable way eastward into Asia. They have been influenced either by motives of commerce or piety; and their accounts are such as might reasonably be expected from men of very narrow or very prejudiced education, the dictates of superstition, or the result of ignorance. Is it not surprising that, in such a variety of adventurers, not one single philosopher should be found? for as to the travels of Gemelli, the learned are long agreed that the whole is but an imposture.²

¹ Reprinted by Goldsmith in 1765, as Essay XVIII.

² "I can affirm it to be no less certain that Gemelli was in Mexico and at Acapulco than that Pallas has been in the Crimea, and Mr. Salt in Abyssinia. Gemelli's descriptions have that local tint which is the principal charm of the narratives of travels written by the most unlettered men; and which can be given only by those who have been ocular witnesses of what they describe."—
BARON DE HUMBOLDT, *Armenian Researches*.

There is scarce any country, how rude or uncultivated soever, where the inhabitants are not possessed of some peculiar secrets, either in nature or art, which might be transplanted with success. In Siberian Tartary, for instance, the natives extract a strong spirit from milk, which is a secret probably unknown to the chemists of Europe. In the most savage parts of India, they are possessed of the secret of dyeing vegetable substances scarlet, and of refining lead into a metal which, for hardness and colour, is little inferior to silver; not one of which secrets but would in Europe make a man's fortune. The power of the Asiatics in producing winds, or bringing down rain, the Europeans are apt to treat as fabulous, because they have no instances of the like nature among themselves; but they would have treated the secrets of gunpowder and the mariner's compass in the same manner, had they been told the Chinese used such arts before the invention was common with themselves at home.

Of all the English philosophers I most reverence Bacon, that great and hardy genius: he it is who allows of secrets yet unknown; who, undaunted by the seeming difficulties that oppose, prompts human curiosity to examine every part of nature, and even exhorts man to try whether he cannot subject the tempest, the thunder, and even earthquakes to human control. Oh, did a man of his daring spirit, of his genius, penetration, and learning, travel to those countries which have been

visited only by the superstitious and mercenary, what might not mankind expect! How would he enlighten the regions to which he travelled! and what a variety of knowledge and useful improvement would he not bring back in exchange!

There is, probably, no country so barbarous that would not disclose all it knew, if it received from a traveller equivalent information; and I am apt to think that a person who was ready to give more knowledge than he received, would be welcome wherever he came. All his care in travelling should only be to suit his intellectual banquet to the people with whom he conversed; he should not attempt to teach the unlettered Tartar astronomy, nor yet instruct the polite Chinese in the ruder arts of subsistence; he should endeavour to improve the barbarian in the secrets of living comfortably, and the inhabitant of a more refined country in the speculative pleasures of science. How much more nobly would a philosopher thus employed spend his time, than by sitting at home, earnestly intent upon adding one star more to his catalogue, or one monster more to his collection; or still, if possible, more triflingly sedulous in the incatenation of fleas, or the sculpture of a cherry-stone!

I never consider this subject without being surprised that none of those societies so laudably established in England for the promotion of arts and learning have ever thought of sending one of their members into the most eastern parts of

Asia, to make what discoveries he was able. To be convinced of the utility of such an undertaking, let them but read the relations of their own travellers. It will be there found that they are as often deceived themselves as they attempt to deceive others. The merchant tells us, perhaps, the price of different commodities, the methods of baling them up, and the properest manner for an European to preserve his health in the country. The missionary, on the other hand, informs us with what pleasure the country to which he was sent embraced Christianity, and the numbers he converted; what methods he took to keep Lent in a region where there was no fish, or the shifts he made to celebrate the rites of his religion in places where there was neither bread nor wine! Such accounts, with the usual appendage of marriage and funerals, inscriptions, rivers, and mountains, make up the whole of an European traveller's diary; but as to all the secrets of which the inhabitants are possessed, those are universally attributed to magic, and when the traveller can give no other account of the wonders he sees performed, very contentedly ascribes them to the power of the devil.

It was a usual observation of Boyle, the English chemist, that if every artist would but discover what new observations occurred to him in the exercise of his trade, philosophy would thence gain innumerable improvements. It may be observed, with still greater justice, that if the useful

knowledge of every country, howsoever barbarous, was gleaned by a judicious observer, the advantages would be inestimable. Are there not even in Europe many useful inventions known or practised but in one place? The instrument, as an example, for cutting down corn in Germany is much more handy and expeditious, in my opinion than the sickle used in England. The cheap and expeditious manner of making vinegar without previous fermentation is known only in a part of France. If such discoveries, therefore, remain still to be known at home, what funds of knowledge might not be collected in countries yet unexplored, or only passed through by ignorant travellers in hasty caravans.¹

The caution with which foreigners are received in Asia may be alleged as an objection to such a

¹ "I hope that a mind comprehensive like yours will find leisure, amidst the cares of your important station, to enquire into many subjects of which the European world either thinks not at all, or thinks with deficient intelligence and uncertain conjecture. I shall hope that he who once intended to increase the learning of his country by the introduction of the Persian language will examine nicely the traditions and histories of the East; that he will survey the wonders of its ancient edifices, and trace the vestiges of its ruined cities; and that, at his return, we shall know the arts and opinions of a race of men from whom very little has been hitherto derived. You, Sir, have no need of being told by me how much may be added by your attention to experimental knowledge and natural history. There are arts of manufacture practised in the countries in which you preside which are yet very imperfectly known here, either by artificers or philosophers. Of the natural productions, animate and inanimate, we yet have so little intelligence that our books are filled, I fear, with conjectures about things which an Indian peasant knows by his senses."—JOHNSON to Warren Hastings, March 30, 1774.

design. But how readily have several European merchants found admission into regions the most suspecting, under the character of *sanjapins*, or northern pilgrims; to such not even China itself denies access.

To send out a traveller properly qualified for these purposes might be an object of national concern; it would, in some measure, repair the breaches made by ambition, and might show that there were still some who boasted a greater name than that of patriots, who professed themselves lovers of men. The only difficulty would remain in choosing a proper person for so arduous an enterprise. He should be a man of a philosophical turn, one apt to deduce consequences of general utility from particular occurrences; neither swollen with pride, nor hardened by prejudice; neither wedded to one particular system, nor instructed only in one particular science; neither wholly a botanist, nor quite an antiquarian; his mind should be tinctured with miscellaneous knowledge; and his manners humanised by an intercourse with men. He should be in some measure an enthusiast in the design; fond of travelling, from a rapid imagination and an innate love of change; furnished with a body capable of sustaining every fatigue, and a heart not easily terrified at danger. Adieu.

LETTER CIX

THE CHINESE PHILOSOPHER ATTEMPTS TO FIND
OUT FAMOUS MEN

From the Same

ONE of the principal tasks I had proposed to myself on my arrival here was to become acquainted with the names and characters of those now living who, as scholars or wits, had acquired the greatest share of reputation. In order to succeed in this design, I fancied the surest method would be to begin my enquiry among the ignorant, judging that his fame would be greatest which was loud enough to be heard by the vulgar. Thus predisposed, I began the search, but only went in quest of disappointment and perplexity. I found every district had a peculiar famous man of its own. Here the story-telling shoemaker had engrossed the admiration on one side of the street, while the bellman, who excelleth at a catch, was in quiet possession of the other. At one end of a lane the sexton was regarded as the greatest man alive; but I had not travelled half

its length till I found an enthusiast teacher had divided his reputation. My landlady, perceiving my design, was kind enough to offer me her advice in this affair. It was true, she observed, she was no judge, but she knew what pleased herself, and if I would rest upon her judgment, I should set down Tom Collins as the most ingenious man in the world; for Tom was able to take off all mankind, and imitate, besides, a sow and pigs to perfection.

I now perceived that taking my standard of reputation among the vulgar would swell my catalogue of great names above the size of a court calendar; I therefore discontinued this method of pursuit, and resolved to prosecute my enquiry in that usual residence of fame, a bookseller's shop.¹ In consequence of this, I entreated the bookseller to let me know who were they who now made the greatest figure, either in morals, wit, or learning. Without giving me a direct answer, he pulled a pamphlet from the shelf, *The Young Attorney's Guide*. "There, Sir," cries he, "there is a touch for you; fifteen hundred of these moved off in a day. I take the author of this pamphlet, either for title, preface, plan, body, or index, to be the completest hand in England."² I found it was in vain to pro-

¹ Jacob Tonson's shop in the Strand was long the rendezvous of the most eminent authors in England; a little later, Garrick made Becket's in Adam Street, Adelphi (the East Strand corner), his house of call for news and gossip; and every reader of Byron's *Life* remembers Murray's four o'clock visitors.

² Books were formerly advertised as written, or translated, by eminent *hands*.

secute my enquiry where my informer appeared so incompetent a judge of merit; so, paying for *The Young Attorney's Guide*, which good manners obliged me to buy, I walked off.

My pursuit after famous men now brought me into a printshop. Here, thought I, the painter only reflects the public voice. As every man who deserved it had formerly his statue placed up in the Roman forum, so here, probably, the pictures of none but such as merit a place in our affections are held up for public sale. But guess my surprise when I came to examine this depository of noted faces! all distinctions were levelled here, as in the grave, and I could not but regard it as the catacomb of real merit. The brick-dust man took as much room as the truncheoned hero, and the judge was elbowed by the thief-taker; quacks, pimps, and buffoons increased the group, and noted stallions only made room for more noted strumpets. I had read the works of some of the moderns, previous to my coming to England, with delight and approbation, but I found their faces had no place here; the walls were covered with the names of authors I had never known, or had endeavoured to forget; with the little self-advertising things of a day, who had forced themselves into fashion, but none into fame. I could read at the bottom of some pictures the names of * *, and * * *, and * * * *, all equally candidates for the vulgar shout, and foremost to propagate their unblushing faces upon

brass. My uneasiness, therefore, at not finding my few favourite names among the number was changed into congratulation. I could not avoid reflecting on the fine observation of Tacitus, on a similar occasion. In this cavalcade of flattery, cries the historian, neither the pictures of Brutus, Cassius, nor Cato, were to be seen; *eo clariores quia imagines eorum non deferabantur*, their absence, being the strongest proof of their merit.

It is in vain, cried I, to seek for true greatness among these monuments of the unburied dead; let me go among the tombs of those who are confessedly famous and see if any have been lately deposited there who deserve the attention of posterity, and whose names may be transmitted to my distant friend as an honour to the present age. Determined in my pursuit, I paid a second visit to Westminster Abbey. There I found several new monuments erected to the memory of several great men; the names of the great men I absolutely forget, but I well remember that Roubiliac was the statuary who carved them. I could not help smiling at two modern epitaphs in particular, one of which praised the deceased for being *ortus ex antiquâ stirpe*; the other commended the dead because *hanc ædem suis sumptibus reædificavit*: the greatest merit of one consisted in his being descended from an illustrious house; the chief distinction of the other, that he had propped up an old house that was falling. Alas, alas! cried I, such monuments as these confer honour, not

upon the great men, but upon little Roubiliac.

Hitherto disappointed in my enquiry after the great of the present age, I was resolved to mix in company, and try what I could learn among critics in coffee-houses; and here it was that I heard my favourite names talked of even with inverted fame. A gentleman of exalted merit as a writer was branded in general terms as a bad man; another of exquisite delicacy as a poet was reproached for wanting good-nature; a third was accused of free-thinking, and a fourth of having once been a player.¹ Strange, cried I, how unjust are mankind in the distribution of fame! The ignorant, among whom I sought at first, were willing to grant, but incapable of distinguishing the virtues of those who deserved it; among those I now converse with, they know the proper objects of admiration, but mix envy with applause.

Disappointed so often, I was now resolved to examine those characters in person of whom the world talked so freely. By conversing with men of real merit² I began to find out these characters which really deserved, though they strove to avoid, applause. I found the vulgar admiration entirely misplaced, and malevolence without its sting. The truly great, possessed of numerous

¹ That Goldsmith had particular persons in his eye when he wrote this account of coffee-house appreciation of authors I have no doubt. The last allusion is, I think, to Murphy; of the general truth of the criticism it would be easy to multiply proofs.

² He had about this time become acquainted with Johnson, whose after influence on his life was indeed great.

small faults and shining virtues, preserve a sublime in morals as in writing. They who have attained an excellence in either, commit numberless transgressions, observable to the meanest understanding. The ignorant critic and dull remarker can readily spy blemishes in eloquence or morals, whose sentiments are not sufficiently elevated to observe a beauty. But such are judges neither of books nor of life; they can diminish no solid reputation by their censure, nor bestow a lasting character by their applause. In short, I found by my search that such only can confer real fame upon others who have merit themselves to deserve it. Adieu.

LETTER CX

SOME PROJECTS FOR INTRODUCING ASIATIC EMPLOYMENTS INTO THE COURTS OF ENGLAND

To the Same

THERE are numberless employments in the courts of the Eastern monarchs utterly unpractised and unknown in Europe. They have no such officers, for instance, as the emperor's ear-tickler, or tooth-picker; they have never introduced at the courts the mandarin appointed to bear the royal tobacco-box, or the grave director of the imperial exertations in the seraglio. Yet I am surprised that the English have imitated us in none of these particulars, as they are generally pleased with everything that comes from China, and excessively fond of creating new and useless employments. They have filled their houses with our furniture, their public gardens with our fireworks, and their very ponds with our fish. Our courtiers, my friend, are the fish and the furniture they should have imported; our courtiers would fill up the necessary ceremonies of a court better

than those of Europe; would be contented with receiving large salaries for doing little, whereas some of this country are at present discontented though they receive large salaries for doing nothing.

I lately, therefore, had thoughts of publishing a proposal here for the admission of some new Eastern offices and titles into their court-register. As I consider myself in the light of a cosmopolite, I find as much satisfaction in scheming for the countries in which I happen to reside as for that in which I was born.

The finest apartments in the palace of Pegu are frequently infested with rats. These the religion of the country strictly forbids the people to kill. In such circumstances, therefore, they are obliged to have recourse to some great man of the court, who is willing to free the royal apartments even at the hazard of his salvation. After a weak monarch's reign, the quantity of court vermin in every corner of the palace is surprising; but a prudent king, and a vigilant officer, soon drive them from their sanctuaries behind the mats and tapestry, and effectually free the court. Such an officer in England would, in my opinion, be serviceable at this juncture; for if, as I am told, the palace be old, much vermin must undoubtedly have taken refuge behind the wainscot and hangings. A minister should therefore be invested with the title and dignities of court vermin-killer: he should have full power either to banish, take, poison, or

destroy them, with enchantments, traps, ferrets, or ratsbane. He might be permitted to brandish his besom without remorse, and brush down every part of the furniture, without sparing a single cobweb, however sacred by long prescription. I communicated this proposal some days ago in a company of the first distinction, and enjoying the most honourable offices of the state. Among the number were the inspector of Great Britain, Mr. Henriquez,¹ the director of the ministry, Ben. Victor, the treasurer,² John Lockman, the secretary, and the conductor of the Imperial Magazine.³ They all acquiesced in the utility of my proposal, but were apprehensive it might meet with some obstruction from court upholsterers and chamber-maids, who would object to it from the demolition of the furniture, and the dangerous use of ferrets and ratsbane.

My next proposal is rather more general than the former, and might probably meet with less opposition. Though no people in the world flatter each other more than the English, I know none who understand the art less, and flatter with such little refinement. Their panegyric, like a Tartar feast, is indeed served up with profusion, but

¹ Jacob Henriquez, a Jew projector. See Essay xiii. of *Unacknowledged Essays*, Vol. VII.

² Benjamin (or, as he was invariably called, Ben) Victor, treasurer of Drury Lane Theatre. He published, 1761-71, a history of the theatres of London and Dublin, 3 vols., 12mo, not devoid of useful information. See GENEST's *English Stage*, v., 539.

³ A newspaper-poet and secretary to the Free British Fishery, an unsuccessful project for establishing a herring fishery.

their cookery is insupportable. A client here shall dress up a fricassee for his patron that shall offend an ordinary nose before it enters the room. A town shall send up their address to a great minister, which shall prove at once a satire on the minister and themselves. If the favourite of the day sits, or stands, or sleeps, there are poets to put it into verse, and priests to preach it in the pulpit. In order, therefore, to free both those who praise and those who are praised from a duty probably disagreeable to both, I would constitute professed flatterers here, as in several courts in India. These are appointed in the courts of their princes, to instruct the people where to exclaim with admiration, and where to lay an emphasis of praise. But an officer of this kind is always in waiting when the emperor converses in a familiar manner among his rajahs and other nobility. At every sentence, when the monarch pauses, and smiles at what he has been saying, the karamatman, as this officer is called, is to take it for granted, that his Majesty has said a good thing. Upon which he cries out "*Karamat! Karamat!* a miracle, a miracle," and throws up his hands and his eyes in ecstasy. This is echoed by the courtiers around, while the emperor sits all this time in sullen satisfaction, enjoying the triumph of his joke, or studying a new repartee.

I would have such an officer placed at every great man's table in England. By frequent practice he might soon become a perfect master

of the art, and in time would turn out pleasing to his patron, no way troublesome to himself, and might prevent the nauseous attempts of many more ignorant pretenders. The clergy here, I am convinced, would relish this proposal. It would provide places for several of them. And, indeed, by some of their late productions, many appeared to have qualified themselves as candidates for this office already.

But my last proposal I take to be of the utmost importance. Our neighbour the Empress of Russia has, you may remember, instituted an order of female knighthood. The Empress of Germany has also instituted another; the Chinese have had such an order time immemorial. I am amazed the English have never come into such an institution. When I consider what kind of men are made knights here, it appears strange that they have never conferred this honour upon women. They make cheesemongers and pastrycooks knights—then why not their wives? They have called up tallow-chandlers to maintain the hardy profession of chivalry and arms—then why not their wives? Haberdashers are sworn, as I suppose all knights must be sworn, “never to fly in time of mellay or battle, to maintain and uphold the noble estate of chivalry, with horse harnishe and other knightlye habiliments.” Haberdashers, I say, are sworn to all this; then why not their wives? Certain I am their wives understand fighting and feats of mellay and battle better than they; and as for “knightlye

horse and harnishe," it is probable both know nothing more than the harness of a one-horse chaise.

No, no, my friend; instead of conferring any order upon the husbands, I would knight their wives. However, the state should not be troubled with a new institution upon this occasion. Some ancient exploded order might be revived, which would furnish both a motto and a name; the ladies might be permitted to choose for themselves. There are, for instance, the obsolete orders of the Dragon in Germany, of the Rue in Scotland, and the Porcupine in France, all well-sounding names, and very applicable to my intended female institution. Adieu.

LETTER CXI

ON THE DIFFERENT SECTS IN ENGLAND, PARTICULARLY METHODISTS

To the Same

RELIGIOUS sects in England are far more numerous than in China. Every man who has interest enough to hire a conventicle here may set up for himself, and sell off a new religion. The sellers of the newest pattern at present give extreme good bargains, and let their disciples have a great deal of confidence for very little money.

Their shops are much frequented, and their customers every day increasing; for people are naturally fond of going to paradise at as small expense as possible.

Yet, you must not conceive this modern sect as differing in opinion from those of the established religion: difference of opinion indeed formerly divided their sectaries, and sometimes drew their armies to the field. White gowns and black mantles, flapped hats and cross pocket-holes, were

once the obvious causes of quarrel; men then had some reason for fighting, they knew what they fought about; but at present they are arrived at such refinement in religion-making that they have actually formed a new sect without a new opinion; they quarrel for opinions they both equally defend; they hate each other, and that is all the difference between them.

But, though their principles are the same, their practice is somewhat different. Those of the established religion laugh when they are pleased and their groans are seldom extorted but by pain or danger. The new sect, on the contrary, weep for their amusement, and use little music except a chorus of sighs and groans, or tunes that are made to imitate groaning. Laughter is their aversion; lovers court each other from the Lamentations; the bridegroom approaches the nuptial couch in sorrowful solemnity, and the bride looks more dismal than an undertaker's shop. Dancing round the room is with them running in a direct line to the devil; and as for gaming, though but in jest, they would sooner play with a rattle-snake's tail than finger a dice-box.

By this time you perceive that I am describing a sect of enthusiasts, and you have already compared them with the Faquirs, Bramins, and Talapins of the East. Among these, you know, are generations that have been never known to smile, and voluntary affliction makes up all the merit they can boast of. Enthusiasms in every country

produce the same effects: stick the Faquir with pins, or confine the Bramin to a vermin hospital; spread the Talapoin on the ground, or load the sectary's brow with contrition; those worshippers who discard the light of reason are ever gloomy; their fears increase in proportion to their ignorance, as men are continually under apprehensions who walk in darkness.

Yet there is still a stronger reason for the enthusiast's being an enemy to laughter; namely, his being himself so proper an object of ridicule. It is remarkable that the propagators of false doctrines have ever been averse to mirth, and always begin by recommending gravity when they intended to disseminate imposture. Fohi, the idol of China, is represented as having never laughed; Zoroaster, the leader of the Bramins, is said to have laughed but twice—upon his coming into the world, and upon his leaving it; and Mahomet himself, though a lover of pleasure, was a professed opposer of gaiety. Upon a certain occasion, telling his followers that they would all appear naked at the resurrection, his favourite wife represented such an assembly as immodest and unbecoming. "Foolish woman!" cried the grave prophet, "though the whole assembly be naked, on that day they shall have forgotten to laugh." Men like him opposed ridicule, because they knew it to be a most formidable antagonist, and preached up gravity, to conceal their own want of importance.

Ridicule has ever been the most powerful enemy of enthusiasm, and properly the only antagonist that can be opposed to it with success. Persecution only serves to propagate new religions; they acquire fresh vigour beneath the executioner and the axe; and, like some vivacious insects, multiply by dissection. It is also impossible to combat enthusiasm with reason, for, though it makes a show of resistance, it soon eludes the pressure;—refers you to distinctions not to be understood, and feelings which it cannot explain. A man who would endeavour to fix an enthusiast by argument might as well attempt to spread quicksilver with his fingers. The only way to conquer a visionary is to despise him; the stake, the faggot, and the disputing doctor in some measure ennoble the opinions they are brought to oppose: they are harmless against innovating pride; contempt alone is truly dreadful. Hunters generally know the most vulnerable part of the beasts they pursue, by the care which every animal takes to defend the side which is weakest; on what side the enthusiast is most vulnerable may be known by the care which he takes in the beginning to work his disciples into gravity, and guard them against the power of ridicule.

When Philip the Second was King of Spain, there was a contest in Salamanca between two orders of friars for superiority. The legend of one side contained more extraordinary miracles, but the legend of the other was reckoned most

authentic. They reviled each other, as is usual in disputes of divinity; the people were divided into factions, and a civil war appeared unavoidable. In order to prevent such an imminent calamity, the combatants were prevailed upon to submit their legends to the fiery trial, and that which came forth untouched by the fire was to have the victory, and to be honoured with a double share of reverence. Whenever the people flock to see a miracle, it is a hundred to one but that they see a miracle; incredible, therefore, were the numbers that were gathered round upon this occasion. The friars on each side approached, and confidently threw their respective legends into the flames, when lo! to the utter disappointment of all the assembly, instead of a miracle, both legends were consumed. Nothing but thus turning both parties into contempt, could have prevented the effusion of blood. The people now laughed at their former folly, and wondered why they fell out. Adieu.

LETTER CXII

AN ELECTION DESCRIBED

To the Same

THE English are at present employed in celebrating a feast which becomes general every seventh year; the Parliament of the nation being then dissolved,¹ and another appointed to be chosen. This solemnity falls infinitely short of our feast of the lanterns, in magnificence and splendour; it is also surpassed by others of the East in unanimity and pure devotion; but no festival in the world can compare with it for eating. Their eating, indeed, amazes me; had I five hundred heads, and were each head furnished with brains, yet would they all be insufficient to compute the number of cows, pigs, geese, and turkeys which upon this occasion die for the good of their country.

To say the truth, eating seems to make a grand ingredient in all English parties of zeal, business,

¹ On the 20th of March, 1761, consequent on the death of George II.

or amusement. When a church is to be built, or an hospital to be endowed, the directors assemble, and, instead of consulting upon it, they eat upon it, by which means the business goes forward with success. When the poor are to be relieved, the officers appointed to dole out public charity assemble and eat upon it: nor has it ever been known that they filled the bellies of the poor, till they had previously satisfied their own. But in the election of magistrates the people seem to exceed all bounds; the merits of a candidate are often measured by the number of his treats; his constituents assemble, eat upon him, and lend their applause, not to his integrity or sense, but to the quantities of his beef and brandy.

And yet I could forgive this people their plentiful meals on this occasion, as it is extremely natural for every man to eat a great deal when he gets it for nothing; but what amazes me is that all this good living no way contributes to improve their good-humour. On the contrary, they seem to lose their temper as they lose their appetites; every morsel they swallow, and every glass they pour down, serves to increase their animosity. Many an honest man, before as harmless as a tame rabbit, when loaded with a single election dinner, has become more dangerous than a charged culverin. Upon one of these occasions, I have actually seen a bloody-minded man-milliner sally forth at the head of a mob, determined to face a desperate pastry-cook, who was general of the opposite party.

But you must not suppose they are without a pretext for thus beating each other. On the contrary, no man here is so uncivilised as to beat his neighbour without producing very sufficient reasons. One candidate, for instance, treats with gin, a spirit of their own manufacture; another always drinks brandy, imported from abroad. Brandy is a wholesome liquor; gin a liquor wholly their own. This then furnishes an obvious cause of quarrel, whether it be most reasonable to get drunk with gin or get drunk with brandy? The mob meet upon the debate; fight themselves sober; and then draw off to get drunk again, and charge for another encounter. So that the English may now properly be said to be engaged in war; since, while they are subduing their enemies abroad, they are breaking each other's heads at home.

I lately made an excursion to a neighbouring village, in order to be a spectator of the ceremonies practised upon this occasion. I left town in company with three fiddlers, nine dozen of hams, and a corporation poet, which were designed as reinforcements to the gin-drinking party. We entered the town with a very good face; the fiddlers, no way intimidated by the enemy, kept handling their arms up the principal street. By this prudent manœuvre they took peaceable possession of their headquarters, amidst the shouts of multitudes, who seemed perfectly rejoiced at hearing their music, but above all at seeing their bacon.

I must own, I could not avoid being pleased to see all ranks of people, on this occasion, levelled into an equality, and the poor, in some measure, enjoying the primitive privileges of nature. If there was any distinction shown, the lowest of the people seemed to receive it from the rich. I could perceive a cobbler with a levee at his door, and a haberdasher giving audience from behind his counter. But my reflections were soon interrupted by a mob, who demanded whether I was for the distillery or the brewery? As these were terms with which I was totally unacquainted, I chose at first to be silent; however, I know not what might have been the consequence of my reserve had not the attention of the mob been called off to a skirmish between a brandy-drinker's cow and a gin-drinker's mastiff, which turned out, greatly to the satisfaction of the mob, in favour of the mastiff.

The spectacle, which afforded high entertainment, was at last ended by the appearance of one of the candidates, who came to harangue the mob; he made a very pathetic speech upon the late excessive importation of foreign drams, and the downfall of the distillery: I could see some of the audience shed tears. He was accompanied in his procession by Mrs. Deputy and Mrs. Mayoress. Mrs. Deputy was not in the least in liquor; and as for Mrs. Mayoress, one of the spectators assured me, in my ear, that—she was a very fine woman before she had the small-pox.

Mixing with the crowd, I was now conducted to the hall where the magistrates are chosen; but, what tongue can describe this scene of confusion! the whole crowd seemed equally inspired with anger, jealousy, politics, patriotism, and punch. I remarked one figure that was carried up by two men upon this occasion. I at first began to pity his infirmities as natural, but soon found the fellow so drunk that he could not stand; another made his appearance to give his vote but, though he could stand, he actually lost the use of his tongue, and remained silent; a third who, though excessively drunk, could both stand and speak, being asked the candidate's name for whom he voted, could be prevailed upon to make no other answer, but "Tobacco and brandy."

In short, an election-hall seems to be a theatre where every passion is seen without disguise; a school where fools may readily become worse, and where philosophers may gather wisdom. Adieu.

LETTER CXIII

A LITERARY CONTEST OF GREAT IMPORTANCE IN
WHICH BOTH SIDES FIGHT BY EPIGRAM

From the Same

THE disputes among the learned here are now carried on in a much more compendious manner than formerly. There was a time when folio was brought to oppose folio, and a champion was often listed for life under the banners of a single sorites. At present, the controversy is decided in a summary way; an epigram or an acrostic finishes the debate, and the combatant, like the incursive Tartar, advances and retires with a single blow.

An important literary debate at present engrosses the attention of the town. It is carried on with sharpness, and a proper share of this epigrammatical fury. An author,¹ it seems, has taken an aversion to the faces of several players,

¹ Charles Churchill. Churchill's *Rosciad* published in March, 1761, without the author's name, is said (and truly) to have occasioned a greater sensation in the public mind than had ever before been excited by any poetical performance.

and has written verses to prove his dislike; the players fall upon the author, and assure the town he must be dull, and their faces must be good, because he wants a dinner; a critic comes to the poet's assistance,¹ asserting that the verses were perfectly original, and so smart that he could never have written them without the assistance of friends; the friends, upon this, arraign the critic, and plainly prove the verses to be all the author's own. So at it they are, all four together by the ears: the friends at the critic, the critic at the players, the players at the author, and the author at the players again. It is impossible to determine how this many-sided contest will end, or which party to adhere to. The town, without siding with any, views the combat in suspense, like the fabled hero of antiquity, who beheld the earth-born brothers give and receive mutual wounds, and fall by indiscriminate destruction.

This is, in some measure, the state of the present dispute; but the combatants here differ in one respect from the champions of the fable. Every new wound only gives vigour for another blow; though they appear to strike, they are in fact mutually swelling themselves into consideration, and thus advertising each other away into fame. "To-day," says one, "my name shall be in the

¹ In *The Critical Review*. Out of this criticism grew the famous "Apology Addressed to the Critical Reviewers by C. Churchill."

Gazette, the next day my rival's; people will naturally inquire about us ; thus we shall at least make a noise in the streets, though we have got nothing to sell." I have read of a dispute of a similar nature which was managed here about twenty years ago. Hildebrand Jacob,¹ as I think he was called, and Charles Johnson,² were poets, both at that time possessed of great reputation; for Johnson had written eleven plays, acted with great success; and Jacob, though he had written but five, had five times thanked the town for their unmerited applause. They soon became mutually enamoured of each other's talents: they wrote, they felt, they challenged the town for each other. Johnson assured the public that no poet alive had the easy simplicity of Jacob, and Jacob exhibited Johnson as a masterpiece in the pathetic. Their mutual praise was not without effect: the town saw their plays, were in raptures—read, and, without censuring them, forgot them. So formidable an union, however, was

¹ Author of *The Fatal Constancy*, a tragedy, of *The Nest of Plays* consisting of three comedies, etc. He was descended from Sir John Jacob of Bromley, one of the farmers of the Customs, and in 1740 succeeded to the title of baronet. He died November, 1790, in his seventy-sixth year, and was buried in St. Anne's, Soho.

² Author of *The Victim* and *Cobbler of Preston*. Died 1748. Pope has immortalised him as "fat Johnson," and in his *Fragment of a Satire* has thus spoken to him:—

• "Jo—n, who now to sense, now nonsense, leaning,
Means not, but blunders round about a meaning."

soon opposed by Tibbald.¹ Tibbald asserted that the tragedies of one had faults, and the comedies of the other substituted wit for vivacity. The combined champions flew at him like tigers, arraigned the censor's judgment, and impeached his sincerity. It was a long time a dispute among the learned, which was in fact the greatest man, Jacob, Johnson, or Tibbald; they had all written for the stage with great success, their names were seen in almost every paper, and their works in every coffee-house. However, in the hottest of the dispute, a fourth combatant made his appearance, and swept away the three combatants, tragedy, comedy, and all, into undistinguished ruin.

From this time they seemed consigned into the hands of criticism; scarce a day passed in which they were not arraigned as detested writers. The critics, those enemies of Dryden and Pope, were their enemies. So Jacob and Johnson, instead of mending by criticism, called it envy; and because Dryden and Pope were censured they compared themselves to Dryden and Pope.

But to return. The weapon chiefly used in the present controversy is epigram; and certainly never was a keener made use of. They have discovered surprising sharpness on both sides. The first that came out upon this occasion was a kind of new composition in this way, and might more

¹ Lewis Theobald, the editor of Shakespeare, and the hero of the first *Dunciad*. Died 1744.

properly be called an epigrammatic thesis than an epigram. It consists, first, of an argument in prose; next follows a motto from Roscommon; then comes the epigram; and lastly, notes serving to explain the epigram. But you shall have it with all its decorations.

AN EPIGRAM

*Addressed to the Gentlemen reflected on in The Rosciad, a Poem
by the Author*

Worried with debts and past all hopes of bail
His pen he prostitutes, t' avoid a gaol.—Roscom.

“Let not the *hungry* Bavius’ angry stroke
Awake resentment, or your rage provoke;
But, pitying his distress, let virtue ¹ shine,
And, giving each your bounty,² *let him dine*;
For, thus retain’d, as learned counsel can,
Each case, however bad, he ’ll new japan:
And, by a quick transition, plainly show
’T was no defect of yours, but *pocket low*,
That caused his *putrid kennel* to o’erflow.”

The last lines are certainly executed in a very masterly manner. It is of that species of argumentation called the perplexing. It effectually flings the antagonist into a mist; there is no answering it: the laugh is raised against him, while he is endeavouring to find out the jest. At once

¹ Charity.—GOLD.

² Settled at one shilling, the price of the poem.—GOLD.

he shows that the author has a kennel, and that this kennel is putrid, and that this putrid kennel overflows. But why does it overflow? It overflows because the author happens to have low pockets!

There was also another new attempt in this way; a prosaic epigram which came out upon this occasion. This is so full of matter that a critic might split it into fifteen epigrams, each properly fitted with its sting. You shall see it.

*To G. C. and R. L.*¹

"'T was you, or I, or he, or all together,
'T was one, both, three of them, they know not
whether:
This I believe, between us great or small,
You, I, he, wrote it not—'t was Churchill's all."

There, there 's a perplex! I could have wished, to make it quite perfect, the author, as in the case before, had added notes. Almost every word admits a scholium, and a long one, too. I, YOU, HE! Suppose a stranger should ask, "and who are you?" Here are three obscure persons spoken of, that may in a short time be utterly forgotten. Their names should have consequently been mentioned in notes at the bottom. But, when the reader comes to the words "great" and "small," the maze is inextricable. Here the stranger may dive for a mystery, without ever

¹ George Colman and Robert Lloyd.

reaching the bottom. Let him know, then, that "small" is a word purely introduced to make good rhyme, and "great" was a very proper word to keep "small" company.

Yet, by being thus a spectator of others' dangers, I must own I begin to tremble in this literary contest for my own. I begin to fear that my challenge to Doctor Rock¹ was unadvised, and has procured me more antagonists than I had at first expected. I have received private letters from several of the literati here, that fill my soul with apprehension. I may safely aver that "I never gave any creature in this good city offence," except only my rival Doctor Rock; yet, by the letters I every day receive, and by some I have seen printed, I am arraigned at one time as being a dull fellow, at another as being pert; I am here petulant, there I am heavy. By the head of my ancestors, they treat me with more inhumanity than a flying fish. If I dive and run my nose to the bottom, there a devouring shark is ready to swallow me up; if I skim the surface, a pack of dolphins are at my tail to snap me; but when I take wing and attempt to escape them by flight, I become a prey to every ravenous bird that winnows the bosom of the deep. Adieu.

¹ See Letter lxviii.

LETTER CXIV

AGAINST THE MARRIAGE ACT—A FABLE¹

To the Same

THE formalities, delays, and disappointments that precede a treaty of marriage here are usually as numerous as those previous to a treaty of peace. The laws of this country are finely calculated to promote all commerce but the commerce between the sexes. Their encouragements for propagating hemp, madder, and tobacco are indeed admirable. Marriages are the only commodity that meets with none.

Yet, from the vernal softness of the air, the verdure of the fields, the transparency of the streams, and the beauty of the women, I know few countries more proper to invite to courtship. Here love might sport among painted lawns and warbling groves, and revel upon gales wafting at once both fragrance and harmony. Yet it seems he has forsaken the island; and, when a couple are now to be married, mutual love or an union of minds is the last and most trifling consideration. If

¹Reprinted by Goldsmith, in 1765, as Essay xxiii.

their goods and chattels can be brought to unite, their sympathetic souls are ever ready to guarantee the treaty. The gentleman's mortgaged lawn becomes enamoured of the lady's marriageable grove; the match is struck up, and both parties are piously in love—according to Act of Parliament.

Thus, they who have fortune are possessed at least of something that is lovely; but I actually pity those that have none. I am told there was a time when ladies with no other merit but youth, virtue, and beauty had a chance for husbands, at least among the ministers of the Church, or the officers of the army. The blush and innocence of sixteen was said to have a powerful influence over these two professions. But of late, all the little traffic of blushing, ogling, dimpling, and smiling has been forbidden by an Act, in that case wisely made and provided. A lady's whole cargo of smiles, sighs, and whispers is declared utterly contraband, till she arrives in the warm latitudes of twenty-two, where commodities of this nature are too often found to decay. She is then permitted to dimple and smile, when the dimples and smiles begin to forsake her; and, when perhaps grown ugly, is charitably entrusted with an unlimited use of her charms. Her lovers, however, by this time have forsaken her; the captain has changed for another mistress; the priest himself leaves her in solitude to bewail her virginity; and she dies even without benefit of clergy.

Thus, you find the Europeans discouraging

love with as much earnestness as the rudest savage of Sofala. The Genius is surely now no more. In every region I find enemies in arms to oppress him. Avarice in Europe, jealousy in Persia, ceremony in China, poverty among the Tartars, and lust in Circassia, are all prepared to oppose his power. The Genius is certainly banished from earth, though once adored under such a variety of forms. He is nowhere to be found; and all that the ladies of each country can produce are but a few trifling relics, as instances of his former residence and favour.

“The Genius of Love,” says the Eastern Apologue, “had long resided in the happy plains of Abra, where every breeze was health, and every sound produced tranquillity. His temple at first was crowded, but every age lessened the number of his votaries, or cooled their devotion. Perceiving, therefore, his altars at length quite deserted, he was resolved to remove to some more propitious region, and he apprised the fair sex of every country where he could hope for a proper reception, to assert their right to his presence among them. In return to this proclamation, embassies were sent from the ladies of every part of the world to invite him, and to display the superiority of their claims.

“At first, the beauties of China appeared. No country could compare with them for modesty, either of look, dress, or behaviour; their eyes were never lifted from the ground; their robes of the

most beautiful silk hid their hands, bosom, and neck, while their faces only were left uncovered. They indulged no airs that might express loose desire, and they seemed to study only the graces of inanimate beauty. Their black teeth and plucked eyebrows were, however, alleged by the Genius against them, but he set them entirely aside when he came to examine their little feet.¹

"The beauties of Circassia next made their appearance. They advanced hand in hand, singing the most immodest airs, and leading up a dance in the most luxurious attitudes. Their dress was but half a covering; the neck, the left breast, and all the limbs were exposed to view, which, after some time, seemed rather to satiate than inflame desire. The lily and the rose contended in forming their complexions, and a soft sleepiness of eye added irresistible poignance to their charms; but their beauties were obtruded, not offered, to their admirers; they seemed to give rather than receive courtship; and the Genius of Love dismissed them as unworthy his regard, since they

¹ "The dress of the females of China is extremely modest and becoming, and, in the higher classes, as splendid as the most exquisite silks and embroidery can make it. What we often choose to call dress, they would regard as absolute nudity. They would frequently be very pretty were it not for the shocking custom of daubing their faces with white and red paint, to which may be added the deformity of cramped feet. The eyebrows of the young women are fashioned until they represent a fine curved line, which is compared to the new moon when only a day or two old, or to the young leaflet of the willow."—DAVIS'S *Chinese*, vol. i., p. 358.

exchanged the duties of love, and made themselves not the pursued, but the pursuing sex.

“The kingdom of Cashmere next produced its charming deputies. This happy region seemed peculiarly sequestered by nature for his abode. Shady mountains fenced it on one side from the scorching sun; and sea-borne breezes, on the other, gave peculiar luxuriance to the air. Their complexions were of a bright yellow, that appeared almost transparent, while the crimson tulip seemed to blossom on their cheeks. Their features and limbs were delicate beyond the statuary’s power to express, and their teeth whiter than their own ivory. He was almost persuaded to reside among them, when, unfortunately, one of the ladies talked of appointing his seraglio.

“In this procession the naked inhabitants of Southern America would not be left behind. Their charms were found to surpass whatever the warmest imagination could conceive; and served to show that beauty could be perfect even with the seeming disadvantage of a brown complexion. But their savage education rendered them utterly unqualified to make the proper use of their power, and they were rejected as being incapable of uniting mental with sensual satisfaction. In this manner the deputies of other kingdoms had their suits rejected: the black beauties of Benin, and the tawny daughters of Borneo; the women of Wida with well-scarred faces, and the hideous virgins of Cafraria; the squab ladies of Lapland, three

feet high, and the giant fair ones of Patagonia.

"The beauties of Europe at last appeared: grace was in their steps, and sensibility sat smiling in every eye. It was the universal opinion, while they were approaching, that they would prevail, and the Genius seemed to lend them his most favourable attention. They opened their pretensions with the utmost modesty; but unfortunately, as their orator proceeded, she happened to let fall the words, "house in town, settlement, and pin-money." These seemingly harmless terms had instantly a surprising effect: the Genius with ungovernable rage burst from amidst the circle, and, waving his youthful pinions, left this earth, and flew back to those ethereal mansions from whence he descended.

"The whole assembly was struck with amazement: they now justly apprehended that female power would be no more, since Love had forsaken them. They continued some time thus in a state of torpid despair, when it was proposed by one of the number that, since the real Genius had left them, in order to continue their power, they should set up an idol in his stead; and that the ladies of every country should furnish him with what each liked best. This proposal was instantly relished and agreed to. An idol was formed by uniting the capricious gifts of all the assembly, though no way resembling the departed Genius. The ladies of China furnished the monster with wings; those of Cashmere supplied him

with horns; the dames of Europe clapped a purse in his hand; and the virgins of Congo furnished him with a tail. Since that time, all the vows addressed to Love are in reality paid to the idol; but, as in other false religions, the adoration seems most fervent where the heart is least sincere." Adieu.

LETTER CXV

ON THE DANGER OF HAVING TOO HIGH AN OPINION OF HUMAN NATURE

To the Same

MANKIND have ever been prone to expatiate in the praise of human nature. The dignity of man is a subject that has always been the favourite theme of humanity: they have declaimed with that ostentation, which usually accompanies such as are sure of having a partial audience; they have obtained victories, because there were none to oppose. Yet, from all I have ever read or seen, men appear more apt to err by having too high, than by having too despicable an opinion of their nature; and by attempting to exalt their original place in creation, depress their real value in society.

The most ignorant nations have always been found to think most highly of themselves. The Deity has ever been thought peculiarly concerned in their glory and preservation; to have fought their battles, and inspired their teachers; their

wizards are said to be familiar with heaven; and every hero has a guard of angels as well as men to attend him. When the Portuguese first came among the wretched inhabitants of the coast of Africa, these savage nations readily allowed the strangers more skill in navigation and war; yet still considered them at best but useful servants, brought to their coast by their guardian serpent, to supply them with luxuries they could have lived without. Though they could grant the Portuguese more riches, they could never allow them to have such a king as their Tottimondelem, who wore a bracelet of shells around his neck, and whose legs were covered with ivory.

In this manner, examine a savage in the history of his country and predecessors; you ever find his warriors able to conquer armies, and his sages acquainted with more than possible knowledge. Human nature is to him an unknown country: he thinks it capable of great things, because he is ignorant of its boundaries; whatever can be conceived to be done, he allows to be possible, and whatever is possible, he conjectures must have been done. He never measures the actions and powers of others by what himself is able to perform; nor makes a proper estimate of the greatness of his fellows, by bringing it to the standard of his own incapacity. He is satisfied to be one of a country where mighty things have been; and imagines the fancied power of others reflects a lustre on himself. Thus, by degrees, he loses the

idea of his own insignificance in a confused notion of the extraordinary powers of humanity, and is willing to grant extraordinary gifts to every pretender, because unacquainted with their claims.

This is the reason why demigods and heroes have ever been erected in times or countries of ignorance and barbarity: they addressed a people who had high opinions of human nature, because they were ignorant how far it could extend; they addressed a people who were willing to allow that men should be gods, because they were yet imperfectly acquainted with God and with man. These impostors knew, that all men are naturally fond of seeing something very great made from the little materials of humanity; that ignorant nations are not more proud of building a tower to reach heaven, or a pyramid to last for ages, than of raising up a demigod of their own country and creation. The same pride that erects a colossus or a pyramid, instals a god or an hero; but though the adoring savage can raise his colossus to the clouds, he can exalt the hero not one inch above the standard of humanity: incapable, therefore, of exalting the idol, he debases himself, and falls prostrate before him.

When man has thus acquired an erroneous idea of the dignity of his species, he and the gods become perfectly intimate; men are but angels, angels are but men, nay but servants, that stand in waiting to execute human commands. The Persians, for instance, thus address their prophet Haly: "I

salute thee, glorious creator, of whom the sun is but the shadow! Masterpiece of the Lord of human creatures! Great star of justice and religion! The sea is not rich and liberal, but by the gifts of thy munificent hands. The angel treasurer of heaven reaps his harvest in the fertile gardens of the purity of thy nature. The *primum mobile* would never dart the ball of the sun through the trunk of heaven, were it not to serve the morning, out of the extreme love she has for thee. The angel Gabriel, messenger of truth, every day kisses the groundsel of thy gate. Were there a place more exalted than the most high throne of God, I would affirm it to be thy place, O master of the faithful! Gabriel, with all his art and knowledge, is but a mere scholar to thee!"¹ Thus, my friend, men think proper to treat angels; but if indeed, there be such an order of beings, with what a degree of satirical contempt must they listen to the songs of little mortals, thus flattering each other! thus to see creatures, wiser indeed, than the monkey, and more active than the oyster, claiming to themselves a mastery of heaven! minims, the tenants of an atom, thus arrogating a partnership in the creation of universal nature! Sure heaven is kind, that launches no thunder at those guilty heads! But it is kind, and regards their follies with pity, nor will destroy creatures that it loved into being.

But whatever success this practice of making

¹ CHARDIN'S *Travels*, p. 402.—GOLDSMITH.

demigods might have been attended with in barbarous nations, I do not know that any man became a god in a country where the inhabitants were refined. Such countries generally have too close an inspection into human weakness, to think it invested with celestial power. They sometimes, indeed, admit the gods of strangers, or of their ancestors, which had their existence in times of obscurity; their weakness being forgotten, while nothing but their power and their miracles were remembered. The Chinese, for instance, never had a god of their own country: the idols, which the vulgar worship at this day, were brought from the barbarous nations around them. The Roman emperors, who pretended to divinity, were generally taught by a poignard that they were mortal; and Alexander, though he passed among barbarous countries for a real god, could never persuade his polite countrymen into a similitude of thinking. The Lacedemonians shrewdly complied with his commands by the following sarcastic edict:—*Εἴ Ἀλέξανδρος βουλέται εἶναι Θεός, Θεός ἔστω.* Adieu.

LETTER CXVI

WHETHER LOVE BE A NATURAL OR FICTITIOUS PASSION

To the Same

THERE is something irresistibly pleasing in the conversation of a fine woman: even though her tongue be silent, the eloquence of her eyes teaches wisdom. The mind sympathises with the regularity of the object in view, and, struck with external grace, vibrates into respondent harmony. In this agreeable disposition, I lately found myself in company with my friend and his niece. Our conversation turned upon love, which she seemed equally capable of defending and inspiring. We were each of different opinions upon this subject: the lady insisted that it was a natural and universal passion, and produced the happiness of those who cultivated it with proper precaution. My friend denied it to be the work of nature, but allowed it to have a real existence, and affirmed, that it was of infinite service in refining society; while I, to keep up the

dispute, affirmed it to be merely a name, first used by the cunning part of the fair sex, and admitted by the silly part of ours, therefore no way more natural than taking snuff, or chewing opium.

“How is it possible,” cried I, “that such a passion can be natural, when our opinions, even of beauty, which inspires it, are entirely the result of fashion and caprice? The ancients, who pretended to be connoisseurs in the art, have praised narrow foreheads, red hair, and eyebrows that joined each other over the nose. Such were the charms that once captivated Catullus, Ovid, and Anacreon. Ladies would at present be out of humour, if their lovers praised them for such graces; and should an antique beauty now revive, her face would certainly be put under the discipline of the tweezer, forehead-cloth, and lead-comb, before it could be seen in public company.

“But the difference between the ancients and moderns is not so great as between the different countries of the present world. A lover of Góngora, for instance, sighs for thick lips; a Chinese lover is poetical in praise of thin. In Circassia, a straight nose is thought most consistent with beauty; cross but a mountain which separates it from the Tartars, and there flat noses, tawny skins, and eyes three inches asunder, are all the fashion. In Persia, and some other countries, a man when he marries, chooses to have his bride a maid. In the Philippine Islands, if a bridegroom happens to perceive, on the first night, that he is put off

with a virgin, the marriage is declared void to all intents and purposes, and the bride sent back with disgrace. In some parts of the East, a woman of beauty, properly fed up for sale, often amounts to one hundred crowns; in the kingdom of Loango, ladies of the very best fashion are sold for a pig; queens, however, sell better, and sometimes amount to a cow. In short, turn even to England, do not I there see the beautiful part of the sex neglected: and none marrying or making love, but old men and old women that have saved money? Do not I see beauty, from fifteen to twenty-one, rendered null and void to all intents and purposes; and those six precious years of womanhood, put under a statute of virginity? What! shall I call that rancid passion love, which passes between an old bachelor of fifty-six, and a widow-lady of forty-nine? Never! never! What advantage is society to reap from an intercourse, where the big belly is oftenest on the man's side? Would any persuade me that such a passion was natural, unless the human race were more fit for love as they approached the decline, and, like silk-worms, became breeders just before they expired?"

"Whether love be natural or no," replied my friend, gravely, "it contributes to the happiness of every society into which it is introduced. All our pleasures are short, and can only charm at intervals; love is a method of protracting our greatest pleasure; and surely that gamester who plays the greatest stake to the best advantage

will, at the end of life, rise victorious. This was the opinion of Vanini,¹ who affirmed, that 'every hour was lost, which was not spent in love.' His accusers were unable to comprehend his meaning; and the poor advocate for love was burned in flames; alas! no way metaphorical. But whatever advantages the individual may reap from this passion, society will certainly be refined and improved by its introduction: all laws calculated to discourage it, tend to embrate the species and weaken the state. Though it cannot plant morals in the human breast, it cultivates them when there: pity, generosity, and honour, receive a brighter polish from its assistance; and a single amour is sufficient entirely to brush off the clown."

"But it is an exotic of the most delicate constitution: it requires the greatest art to introduce it into a state, and the smallest discouragement is sufficient to repress it again. Let us only consider with what ease it was formerly extinguished in Rome, and with what difficulty it was lately revived in Europe: it seemed to sleep for ages, and at last fought its way among us through tilts, tournaments, dragons, and all the dreams of chivalry. The rest of the world, China only excepted, are, and have ever been, utter strangers to its delights and advantages. In other coun-

¹ A priest, born 1585, at Tourosano, in the kingdom of Naples, died 1619. After preaching atheism in England, Germany, and Holland, he was apprehended at Toulouse and condemned to the flames.

tries, as men find themselves stronger than women, they lay a claim to a rigorous superiority: this is natural, and love, which gives up this natural advantage, must certainly be the effect of art,—an art calculated to lengthen out our happier moments, and add new graces to society.”

“I entirely acquiesce in your sentiments,” says the lady, “with regard to the advantages of this passion, but cannot avoid giving it a nobler origin than you have been pleased to assign. I must think, that those countries where it is rejected, are obliged to have recourse to art, to stifle so natural a production; and those nations where it is cultivated, only make nearer advances to nature. The same efforts that are used in some places to suppress pity, and other natural passions, may have been employed to extinguish love. No nation, however, unpolished, is remarkable for innocence, that is not famous for passion; it has flourished in the coldest, as well as the warmest regions. Even in the sultry wilds of Southern America, the lover is not satisfied with possessing his mistress’s person, without having her mind.

“ ‘In all my Enna’s beauties blest, ,
Amidst profusion still I pine;
For though she gives me up her breast,
Its panting tenant is not mine.’ ¹

“But the effects of love are too violent to be the result of an artificial passion. Nor is it in the power of fashion to force the constitution into

¹ Translation of a South American Ode.—GOLDSMITH.

those changes which we every day observe. Several have died of it. Few lovers are unacquainted with the fate of the two Italian lovers, Da Corsin and Julia Bellamano, who, after a long separation, expired with pleasure in each other's arms. Such instances are too strong confirmations of the reality of the passion, and serve to show, that suppressing it is but opposing the natural dictates of the heart." Adieu.

LETTER CXVII

A CITY NIGHT-PIECE ¹

To the Same

THE clock just struck two, the expiring taper rises and sinks in the socket, the watchman forgets the hour in slumber, the laborious and the happy are at rest, and nothing wakes but meditation, guilt, revelry, and despair. The drunkard once more fills the destroying bowl, the robber walks his midnight round, and the suicide lifts his guilty arm against his own sacred person.

Let me no longer waste the night over the page of antiquity, or the sallies of cotemporary genius, but pursue the solitary walk, where vanity, ever changing, but a few hours past walked before me, where she kept up the pageant, and now, like a froward child, seems hushed with her own importunities.²

What a gloom hangs all around! The dying lamp feebly emits a yellow gleam; no sound is

¹ First printed in No. IV. of *The Bee*, with the following motto:

"Ille dolet vere, qui sine teste dolet."—MART.

² See Vol. II., p. 25, and No. IV. of *The Bee*.



heard but of the chiming clock, or the distant watch-dog. All the bustle of human pride is forgotten, an hour like this may well display the emptiness of human vanity.

There will come a time when this temporary solitude may be made continual, and the city itself, like its inhabitants, fade away, and leave a desert in its room.

What cities, as great as this, have once triumphed in existence; had their victories as great; joy as just and as unbounded, and with short-sighted presumption, promised themselves immortality! Posterity can hardly trace the situation of some: the sorrowful traveller wanders over the awful ruins of others; and, as he beholds, he learns wisdom, and feels the transience of every sublunary possession.

“Here,” he cries, “stood their citadel, now grown over with weeds; there, their senate-house, but now the haunt of every noxious reptile; temples and theatres stood here, now only an undistinguished heap of ruin. They are fallen; for luxury and avarice first made them feeble. The rewards of the state were conferred on amusing, and not on useful members of society. Their riches and opulence invited the invaders, who, though at first repulsed, returned again, conquered by perseverance, and at last swept the defendants into undistinguished destruction.”

How few appear in those streets which, but some few hours ago, were crowded! and those who

appear, now no longer wear their daily mask, nor attempt to hide their lewdness or their misery.

But who are those who make the streets their couch, and find a short repose from wretchedness at the doors of the opulent? These are strangers, wanderers, and orphans, whose circumstances are too humble to expect redress, and whose distresses are too great even for pity. Their wretchedness rather excites horror than pity. Some are without the covering even of rags, and others emaciated with disease: the world has disclaimed them; society turns its back upon their distress, and has given them up to nakedness and hunger. These poor shivering females have once seen happier days, and been flattered into beauty. They have been prostituted to the gay luxurious villain, and are now turned out to meet the severity of winter. Perhaps, now lying at the doors of their betrayers, they sue to wretches whose hearts are insensible, or debauchees who may curse, but will not relieve them.¹

Why, why was I born a man, and yet see the sufferings of wretches I cannot relieve! Poor houseless creatures! the world will give you

¹ —————“ Ah, turn thine eyes,
Where the poor houseless shivering female lies.
She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,
Has wept at tales of innocence distrest;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn,
Now lost to all; her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head.”

—*The Deserted Village.*

reproaches, but will not give you relief. The slightest misfortunes of the great, the most imaginary uneasinesses of the rich, are aggravated with all the power of eloquence, and held up to engage our attention and sympathetic sorrow. The poor weep unheeded, persecuted by every subordinate species of tyranny; and every law, which gives others security, becomes an enemy to them.

Why was this heart of mine formed with so much sensibility! or why was not my fortune adapted to its impulse! Tenderness, without a capacity of relieving, only makes the man who feels it, more wretched than the object which sues for assistance.¹ Adieu.

¹ The following paragraph, with which (in *The Bee*) the paper originally concluded, had, probably, some personal allusion:—

“But let me turn from a scene of such distress to the sanctified hypocrite, *who has been talking of virtue till the time of bed*, and now steals out, to give a loose to his vices, under the protection of midnight; vices more atrocious, because he attempts to conceal them. See how he pants down the dark alley, and, with hastening steps, fears an acquaintance in every face. He has passed the whole day in company he hates, and now goes to prolong the night among company that as heartily hate him. May his vices be detected; may the morning rise upon his shame! Yet I wish to no purpose; villainy, when detected, never gives up, but boldly adds impudence to imposture.”

LETTER CXVIII

ON THE MEANNESS OF THE DUTCH AT THE COURT OF JAPAN

*From Fum Hoam to Lien Chi Altangi, the discontented wanderer,
by the way of Moscow, etc.*

I HAVE been just sent upon an embassy to Japan. My commission is to be dispatched in four days, and you can hardly conceive the pleasure I shall find, upon revisiting my native country. I shall leave with joy this proud, barbarous, inhospitable region, where every object conspires to diminish my satisfaction, and increase my patriotism.

But though I find the inhabitants savage, yet the Dutch merchants who are permitted to trade hither, seem still more detestable. They have raised my dislike to Europe in general; by them I learn how low avarice can degrade human nature; how many indignities an European will suffer for gain.

I was present at an audience given by the emperor to the Dutch envoy, who had sent several presents to all the courtiers, some days previous

to his admission; but he was obliged to attend those designed for the emperor himself. From the accounts I had heard of this ceremony, my curiosity prompted me to be a spectator of the whole.

First went the presents, set out on beautiful enamelled tables, adorned with flowers, borne on men's shoulders, and followed by Japanese music and dancers. From so great respect paid to the gifts themselves, I had fancied the donors must have received almost divine honours. But, about a quarter of an hour after the presents had been carried in triumph, the envoy and his train were brought forward. They were covered from head to foot with long black veils, which prevented their seeing, each led by a conductor, chosen from the meanest of the people. In this dishonourable manner, having traversed the city of Jedo, they at length arrived at the palace-gate, and, after waiting half an hour, were admitted into the guard-room. Here their eyes were uncovered, and, in about an hour, the gentleman-usher introduced them into the Hall of Audience.¹ The emperor was at length shown, sitting in a kind of alcove at the upper end of the room, and the Dutch envoy was conducted towards the throne.

As soon as he had approached within a certain distance, the gentleman-usher cried out with a loud voice, "Holanda Capitan!" Upon these words, the envoy fell flat upon the ground, and crept upon his

¹ "Otherwise, the Hall of a Hundred Mats."—KÄMPFER, *History of Japan*, vol. ii., p. 531.

hands and feet towards the throne. Still approaching, he reared himself upon his knees, and then bowed his forehead to the ground. These ceremonies being over, he was directed to withdraw, still grovelling on his belly, and going backward like a lobster.¹

Men must be excessively fond of riches, when they are earned with such circumstances of abject submission. Do the Europeans worship heaven itself with marks of more profound respect? Do they confer those honours on the Supreme of Beings, which they pay to a barbarous king, who gives them a permission to purchase trinkets and porcelain? What a glorious exchange, to forfeit their national honour, and even their title to humanity, for a screen or a snuff-box!

If these ceremonies essayed in the first audience appeared mortifying, those which are practised in the second were infinitely more so. In the second audience, the emperor and the ladies of court were placed behind lattices, in such a manner as to see without being seen. Here all the Europeans were directed to pass in review, and grovel and act the serpent as before: with this spectacle the whole court seemed highly delighted. The strangers were asked a thousand ridiculous questions, as their names, and their ages; they were ordered to write, to stand upright, to sit, to stoop, to compliment each other, to be drunk, to speak the Japanese language, to talk Dutch, to sing, to

¹ See KÄMPFER'S *History of Japan*, vol., ii., p. 532.

eat; in short, they were ordered to do all that could satisfy the curiosity of women.¹

Imagine, my dear Altangi, a set of grave men thus transformed into buffoons, and acting a part every whit as honourable as that of those instructed animals which are shewn in the streets of Pekin to the mob, on a holiday. Yet the ceremony did not end here, for every great lord of the court was to be visited in the same manner; and their ladies, who took the whim from their husbands, were all equally fond of seeing the strangers perform, even the children seemed highly diverted with the dancing Dutchmen.

"Alas!" cried I to myself, upon returning from such a spectacle, "is this the nation which assumes such dignity at the court of Pekin? Is this that people that appear so proud at home, and in every country where they have the least authority? How does a love of gain transform the gravest of mankind into the most contemptible and ridiculous! I had rather continue poor all my life, than become rich at such a rate. Perish those riches which are acquired at the expense of my honour or my

¹ "We obeyed the emperor's commands in the best manner we could. I joined to my dance a love-song in High Dutch. In this manner, and with innumerable such other apish tricks, did we suffer ourselves to contribute to the emperor and the court's diversion. As I was dancing," continues the grave doctor, "I had an opportunity twice of seeing the empress through the slits of the lattices, and took notice that she was of a brown and beautiful complexion, with black European eyes, full of fire, and from the proportion of her head, which was pretty large, I judged her to be a tall woman, and about thirty-six years of age."—KÄMPFER, vol. ii., p. 535.

humanity! Let me quit," said I, "a country where there are none but such as treat all others like slaves, and more detestable still, in suffering such treatment. I have seen enough of this nation to desire to see more of others. Let me leave a people suspicious to excess, whose morals are corrupted, and equally debased by superstition and vice; where the sciences are left uncultivated; where the great are slaves to the prince, and tyrants to the people; where the women are chaste only when debarred of the power of transgression; where the true disciples of Confucius are not less persecuted than those of Christianity; in a word, a country where men are forbidden to think, and consequently labour under the most miserable slavery—that of mental servitude." Adieu.

LETTER CXIX

ON THE DISTRESSES OF THE POOR; EXEMPLIFIED
IN THE LIFE OF A COMMON SOLDIER.¹

From Lien Chi Altangi, to Fum Hoam, etc.

THE misfortunes of the great, my friend, are held up to engage our attention; are enlarged upon, in tones of declamation, and the world is called upon to gaze at the noble sufferers: they have at once the comfort of admiration and pity.

Yet, where is the magnanimity of bearing misfortunes when the whole world is looking on? Men in such circumstances can act bravely, even from motives of vanity. He only who, in the vale of obscurity, can brave adversity, who, without friends to encourage, acquaintances to pity, or even without hope to alleviate his distresses, can behave with tranquillity and indifference, is truly great: whether peasant or courtier, he deserves admiration, and should be held up for our imitation and respect.

¹ First printed in *The British Magazine*, 1760; and reprinted by its author in 1765, with many alterations, as Essay XXIV.

The miseries of the poor are, however, entirely disregarded; though some undergo more real hardships in one day, than the great in their whole lives. It is indeed inconceivable what difficulties the meanest English sailor or soldier endures, without murmuring or regret. Every day is to him a day of misery, and yet he bears his hard fate without repining.

With what indignation do I hear the heroes of tragedy¹ complain of misfortunes and hardships, whose greatest calamity is founded in arrogance and pride! Their severest distresses are pleasures, compared to what many of the adventuring poor every day sustain without murmuring. These may eat, drink, and sleep; have slaves to attend them, and are sure of subsistence for life: while many of their fellow-creatures are obliged to wander, without a friend to comfort or to assist them, find enmity in every law, and are too poor to obtain even justice.

I have been led into these reflections from accidentally meeting, some days ago, a poor fellow begging at one of the outlets of this town with a wooden leg. I was curious to learn what had reduced him to his present situation; and, after giving him what I thought proper, desired to know the history of his life and misfortunes, and the

¹ "With what indignation do I hear an Ovid, a Cicero, or a Rabutin, complain of their misfortunes and hardships, whose greatest calamity was that of being unable to visit a certain spot of earth, to which they had foolishly attached an idea of happiness."
—*Essays*, 12mo. 1765, p. 215.

manner in which he was reduced to his present distress. The disabled soldier, for such he was, with an intrepidity truly British, leaning on his crutch, put himself into an attitude to comply with my request, and gave me his history as follows:—

“As for misfortunes, Sir, I cannot pretend to have gone through more than others. Except the loss of my limb, and my being obliged to beg, I don’t know any reason, thank Heaven, that I have to complain: there are some who have lost both legs and an eye; but, thank Heaven, it is not quite so bad with me.

“My father was a labourer in the country, and died when I was five years old; so I was put upon the parish. As he had been a wandering sort of a man, the parishioners were not able to tell to what parish I belonged, or where I was born; so they sent me to another parish, and that parish sent me to a third; till at last it was thought I belonged to no parish at all. At length, however, they fixed me. I had some disposition to be a scholar, and had actually learned my letters; but the master of the workhouse put me to business, as soon as I was able to handle a mallet.

“Here I lived an easy kind of a life for five years. I only wrought ten hours in the day, and had my meat and drink provided for my labour. It is true, I was not suffered to stir far from the house, for fear I should run away: but what of that? I had the liberty of the whole house, and the yard before the door, and that was enough for me.

“I was next bound out to a farmer, where I was up both early and late, but I ate and drank well, and liked my business well enough, till he died. Being then obliged to provide for myself, I was resolved to go and seek my fortune. Thus I lived, and went from town to town, working when I could get employment, and starving when I could get none, and might have lived so still; but happening one day to go through a field belonging to a magistrate, I spied a hare crossing the path just before me. I believe the devil put it in my head to fling my stick at it: well! what will you have on’t? I killed the hare, and was bringing it away in triumph, when the justice himself met me: he called me a villain, and collaring me, desired I would give an account of myself. I began immediately to give a full account of all that I knew of my breed, seed, and generation; but though I gave a very long account, the justice said, I could give no account of myself; so I was indicted, and found guilty of being poor, and sent to Newgate, in order to be transported to the plantations.

“People may say this and that of being in gaol; but for my part, I found Newgate as agreeable a place as ever I was in, in all my life. I had my belly-full to eat and drink, and did no work; but alas! this kind of life was too good to last for ever: I was taken out of prison, after five months, put on board of a ship, and sent off with two hundred more. Our passage was but indifferent, for we were all confined in the hold, and died very fast,

for want of sweet air and provisions; but, for my part I did not want meat, because I had a fever all the way. Providence was kind; when provisions grew short, it took away my desire of eating. When we came ashore, we were sold to the planters. I was bound for seven years, and as I was no scholar, for I had forgot my letters, I was obliged to work among the negroes; and served out my time, as in duty bound to do.

“When my time was expired, I worked my passage home, and glad I was to see Old England again, because I loved my country. O liberty! liberty! liberty! that is the property of every Englishman, and I will die in its defence. I was afraid, however, that I should be indicted for a vagabond once more, so did not much care to go into the country, but kept about town, and did little jobs when I could get them. I was very happy in this manner for some time; till one evening, coming home from work, two men knocked me down, and then desired me to stand still. They belonged to a press-gang: I was carried before the justice, and as I could give no account of myself (that was the thing that always hobbled me), I had my choice left, whether to go on board a man of war, or list for a soldier. I chose to be a soldier; and in this post of a gentleman, I served two campaigns in Flanders, was at the battles of Val and Fontenoy, and received but one wound through the breast, which is troublesome to this day.

“When the peace came on, I was discharged;

and as I could not work, because my wound was sometimes painful, I listed for a landman in the East-India Company's service. I here fought the French in six pitched battles; and verily believe, that if I could read or write, our captain would have given me promotion, and made me a corporal. But that was not my good fortune; I soon fell sick, and when I became good for nothing, got leave to return home again, with forty pounds in my pocket, which I saved in the service. This was at the beginning of the present war, so I hoped to be set on shore, and to have the pleasure of spending my money; but the government wanted men, and I was pressed again, before ever I could set foot on shore.

"The boatswain found me, as he said, an obstinate fellow: he swore that I understood my business perfectly well, but that I shammed Abraham,¹ merely to be idle. God knows, I knew nothing of sea-business: he beat me without considering what he was about. But still my forty pounds was some comfort to me under every beating: the money was my comfort, and the money I might have had to this day, but that our ship was taken by the French, and so I lost it all.

"Our crew was carried into a French prison, and many of them died, because they were not used to live in a gaol; but for my part, it was nothing to me, for I was seasoned. One night,

¹ That is, assumed infirmity.

however, as I was sleeping on the bed of boards, with a warm blanket about me, (for I always loved to lie well,) I was awakened by the boat-swain, who had a dark lantern in his hand. 'Jack,' says he to me, 'will you knock out the French sentry's brains?' 'I don't care,' says I, striving to keep myself awake, 'if I lend a hand.' 'Then follow me,' says he, 'and I hope we shall do business.' So up I got, and tied my blanket, which was all the clothes I had, about my middle, and went with him to fight the Frenchmen.¹ We had no arms; but one Englishman is able to beat five French at any time; so we went down to the door, where both the sentries were posted, and rushing upon them, seized their arms in a moment, and knocked them down. From thence nine of us ran together to the quay, and seizing the first boat we met, got out of the harbour, and put to sea. We had not been here three days, before we were taken up by an English privateer, who was glad of so many good hands; and we consented to run our chance. However, we had not so much luck as we expected. In three days we fell in with a French man-of-war, of forty guns, while we had but twenty-three; so to it we went. The fight lasted for three hours; and I verily believe that we should have taken the Frenchman, but unfortunately, we lost almost all our men just as we were going to get the victory. I

¹ Here Essay XXIV. adds, "I hate the French because they are all slaves and wear wooden shoes."

was once more in the power of the French, and I believe it would have gone hard with me, had I been brought back to my old gaol in Brest; but by good fortune, we were retaken, and carried to England once more.

“I had almost forgot to tell you, that in this last engagement I was wounded in two places: I lost four fingers of the left hand, and my leg was shot off. Had I had the good fortune to have lost my leg and use of my hand on board a king’s ship and not a privateer, I should have been entitled to clothing and maintenance during the rest of my life; but that was not my chance: one man is born with a silver spoon in his mouth, and another with a wooden ladle. However, blessed be God! I enjoy good health, and have no enemy in this world, that I know of, but the French and the justice of peace.”

Thus saying, he limped off, leaving my friend and me in admiration of his intrepidity and content; nor could we avoid acknowledging, that an habitual acquaintance with misery is the truest school of fortitude and philosophy. Adieu.

LETTER CXX

ON THE ABSURDITY OF SOME LATE ENGLISH TITLES

From the Same

THE titles of European princes are rather more numerous than ours of Asia, but by no means so sublime. The King of Visapour or Pegu, not satisfied with claiming the globe and all its appurtenances to him and his heirs, asserts a property even in the firmament, and extends his orders to the Milky Way. The monarchs of Europe, with more modesty, confine their titles to earth, but make up by number what is wanting in their sublimity. Such is their passion for a long list of these splendid trifles, that I have known a German prince with more titles than subjects, and a Spanish nobleman with more names than shirts.

Contrary to this, "the English monarchs," says a writer of the last century, "disdain to accept such titles, which tend only to increase their pride, without improving their glory; they are above depending on the feeble helps of heraldry

for respect, perfectly satisfied with the consciousness of acknowledged power." At present, however, these maxims are laid aside; the English monarchs have of late assumed new titles, and have impressed their coins with the names and arms of obscure dukedoms, petty states, and subordinate employments. Their design in this, I make no doubt, was laudably to add new lustre to the British throne; but, in reality, paltry claims only serve to diminish that respect they are designed to secure.

There is in the honours assumed by kings, as in the decorations of architecture, a majestic simplicity, which best conduces to inspire our reverence and respect: numerous and trifling ornaments in either, are strong indications of meanness in the designer, or of concealed deformity. Should, for instance, the Emperor of China, among other titles, assume that of deputy mandarin of Maccau, or the Monarch of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, desire to be acknowledged as Duke of Brentford, Lunenburgh, or Lincoln, the observer revolts at this mixture of important and paltry claims, and forgets the emperor in his familiarity with the duke or the deputy.

I remember a similar instance of this inverted ambition, in the illustrious king of Manacabo, upon his first treaty with the Portuguese. Among the presents that were made him by the ambassador of that nation, was a sword, with a brass hilt, which he seemed to set a peculiar value upon.

This he thought too great an acquisition to his glory, to be forgotten among the number of his titles. He therefore gave orders, that his subjects should style him for the future, "Talipot, the immortal Potentate of Manacabo, Messenger of the Morning, Enlightener of the Sun, Possessor of the whole Earth, and mighty Monarch of the brass-handled Sword."

This method of mixing majestic and paltry titles, of quartering the arms of a great empire and an obscure province upon the same medal here, had its rise in the virtuous partiality of their late monarchs. Willing to testify an affection to their native country, they gave its name and ensigns a place upon their coins, and thus, in some measure, ennobled its obscurity. It was, indeed, but just, that a people which had given England up their king, should receive some honorary equivalent in return; but at present these motives are no more: England has now a monarch wholly British, and has some reason to hope for British titles upon British coins.

However, were the money of England designed to circulate in Germany, there would be no flagrant impropriety in impressing it with German names and arms; but though this might have been so upon former occasions, I am told there is no danger of it for the future. As England, therefore, designs so keep back its gold, I candidly think Lunenburg, Oldenburg, and the rest of them, may very well keep back their titles.

It is a mistaken prejudice in princes, to think that a number of loud-sounding names can give new claims to respect. The truly great have ever disdained them. When Timur the Lame had conquered Asia, an orator by profession came to compliment him upon the occasion. He began his harangue, by styling him the most omnipotent, and the most glorious object of the creation. The emperor seemed displeased with his paltry adulation; yet still he went on, complimenting him, as the most mighty, the most valiant, and the most perfect of beings. "Hold there, my friend," cries the late emperor: "hold there, till I have got another leg." In fact, the feeble or the despotic alone find pleasure in multiplying these pageants of vanity; but strength and freedom have nobler aims, and often find the finest adulation in majestic simplicity.

The young monarch of this country has already testified a proper contempt for several unmeaning appendages on royalty: cooks and scullions have been obliged to quit their fires; gentlemen's gentlemen, and the whole tribe of necessary people, who did nothing, have been dismissed from further services. A youth who can thus bring back simplicity and frugality to a court, will soon, probably, have a true respect for his own glory; and while he has dismissed all useless employments, may disdain to accept of empty or degrading titles. Adieu.

LETTER CXXI

THE IRRESOLUTION OF THE ENGLISH ACCOUNTED FOR

From the Same

WHENEVER I attempt to characterise the English in general, some unforeseen difficulties constantly occur to disconcert my design; I hesitate between censure and praise. When I consider them as a reasoning, philosophical people, they have my applause; but when I reverse the medal, and observe their inconstancy and irresolution, I can scarcely persuade myself that I am observing the same people.

Yet, upon examination, this very inconstancy, so remarkable here, flows from no other source than their love of reasoning. The man who examines a complicated subject on every side, and calls in reason to his assistance, will frequently change; will find himself distracted by opposing probabilities and contending proofs: every alteration of place will diversify the prospect, will give some latent argument new force, and contribute to maintain an anarchy in the mind.

On the contrary, they who never examine with

their own reason, act with more simplicity. Ignorance is positive, instinct perseveres, and the human being moves in safety, within the narrow circle of brutal uniformity. What is true with regard to individuals, is not less so when applied to states. A reasoning government like this is in continual fluctuation, while those kingdoms where men are taught not to controvert but obey, continue always the same. In Asia, for instance, where the monarch's authority is supported by force, and acknowledged through fear, a change of government is entirely unknown. All the inhabitants seem to wear the same mental complexion, and remain contented with hereditary oppression. The sovereign's pleasure is the ultimate rule of duty; every branch of the administration is a perfect epitome of the whole; and if one tyrant is deposed, another starts up in his room, to govern as his predecessor. The English, on the contrary, instead of being led by power, endeavour to guide themselves by reason; instead of appealing to the pleasure of the prince, appeal to the original rights of mankind. What one rank of men assert is denied by others, as the reasons on opposite sides happen to come home with greater or less conviction. The people of Asia are directed by precedent, which never alters; the English by reason, which is ever changing its appearance.

The disadvantages of an Asiatic government, acting in this manner by precedent, are evident: original errors are thus continued without hopes

of redress; and all marks of genius are levelled down to one standard, since no superiority of thinking can be allowed its exertion in mending obvious defects. But to recompense those defects, their governments undergo no new alterations; they have no new evils to fear, nor no fermentations in the constitution that continue: the struggle for power is soon over, and all becomes tranquil as before; they are habituated to subordination, and men are taught to form no other desires than those which they are allowed to satisfy.

The disadvantages of a government acting from the immediate influence of reason, like that of England, are not less than those of the former. It is extremely difficult to induce a number of free beings to co-operate for their mutual benefit; every possible advantage will necessarily be sought, and every attempt to procure it must be attended with a new fermentation; various reasons will lead different ways, and equity and advantage will often be balanced by a combination of clamour and prejudice. But though such a people may be thus in the wrong, they have been influenced by a happy delusion; their errors are seldom seen till they are felt; each man is himself the tyrant he has obeyed, and such a master he can easily forgive. The disadvantages he feels may, in reality, be equal to what is felt in the most despotic government; but man will bear every calamity with patience, when he knows himself to be the author of his own misfortunes. Adieu.

LETTER CXXII

THE MANNER OF TRAVELLERS IN THEIR USUAL RELATIONS RIDICULED

From the Same

MY long residence here begins to fatigue me. As every object ceases to be new, it no longer continues to be pleasing: some minds are so fond of variety that pleasure itself, if permanent, would be insupportable; and we are thus obliged to solicit new happiness, even by courting distress. I only, therefore, wait the arrival of my son to vary this trifling scene, and borrow new pleasure from danger and fatigue. A life, I own, thus spent in wandering from place to place, is at best but empty dissipation. But to pursue trifles is the lot of humanity; and whether we bustle in a pantomime, or strut at a coronation; whether we shout at a bonfire, or harangue at a senate-house; whatever object we follow, it will at last surely conduct us to futility and disappointment. The wise bustle and laugh as they walk in the pageant, but fools bustle and are important; and this probably is all the difference between them.

This may be an apology for the levity of my former correspondence; I talked of trifles, and I knew that they were trifles: to make the things of this life ridiculous, it is only sufficient to call them by their names.

In other respects, I have omitted several striking circumstances in the description of this country, as supposing them either already known to you, or as not being thoroughly known to myself: but there is one omission, for which I expect no forgiveness, namely, my being totally silent upon their buildings, roads, rivers, and mountains. This is a branch of science, on which all other travellers are so very prolix, that my deficiency will appear the more glaring. With what pleasure, for instance, do some read of a traveller in Egypt, measuring a fallen column with his cane, and finding it exactly five feet nine inches long; of his creeping through the mouth of a catacomb, and coming out by a different hole from that he entered; of his stealing the finger of an antique statue in spite of the janizary that watched him; or his adding a new conjecture to the hundred and fourteen conjectures already published, upon the names of Osiris and Isis.

Methinks I hear some of my friends in China demanding a similar account of London and the adjacent villages; and if I remain here much longer, it is probable I may gratify their curiosity. I intend, when run dry on other topics, to take a serious survey of the city hall; to describe that

beautiful building the Mansion House; I will enumerate the magnificent squares, in which the nobility chiefly reside; and the royal palaces, appointed for the reception of the English monarch; nor will I forget the beauties of Shoe Lane, in which I myself have resided since my arrival. You shall find me in no way inferior to many of my brother travellers, in the arts of description. At present, however, as a specimen of this way of writing. I send you a few hasty remarks, collected in a late journey I made to Kentish Town¹—and this in the manner of modern voyagers. “Having heard much of Kentish Town, I conceived a strong desire to see that celebrated place. I could have wished, indeed, to satisfy my curiosity without going thither; but that was impracticable, and therefore I resolved to go. Travellers have two methods of going to Kentish Town; they take coach, which costs ninepence, or they may go afoot, which costs nothing: in my opinion, a coach is by far the most eligible convenience; but I was resolved to go on foot, having considered with myself, that going in that manner would be the cheapest way.

“As you set out from Dog House Bar,² you

¹ A hamlet and prebendal manor of St. Paul's, north-west of St. Pancras, and written in Court-rolls of the 14th century as Kaunteloe or de Kaunteloe. The lease passed, in 1670, into the hands of the Jeffreys family, and subsequently, by marriage, to the first Earl Camden, in whose family it still remains. Kentish Town is now (1854) part of modern London.

² Dog House Bar stood across the City Road, where Old Street

enter upon a fine level road, railed in on both sides, commanding on the right, a small prospect of groves and fields, enamelled with flowers, which would wonderfully charm the sense of smelling, were it not for a dunghill on the left, which mixes its effluvia with their odours. This dunghill is of much greater antiquity than the road; and I must not omit a piece of injustice I was going to commit upon this occasion. My indignation was levelled against the makers of the dunghill, for having brought it so near the road; whereas it should have fallen upon the makers of the road, for having brought that so near the dunghill.

“After proceeding in this manner for some time, a building resembling somewhat a triumphal arch salutes the traveller’s view. This structure, however, is peculiar to this country, and vulgarly called a turnpike-gate. I could perceive a long inscription in large characters on the front, probably upon the occasion of some triumph, but, being in haste, I left it to be made out by some subsequent adventurer who may happen to travel this way; so, continuing my course to the west, I soon arrived at an unwall’d town, called Islington.¹

“Islington is a pretty neat town, mostly built and Old Street Road now unite. It is marked in the maps of London, engraved in the reign of George II.

¹ “The monster London” of Cowley’s poem upon “Solitude.”

“Let but thy wicked men from out thee go,
And all the fools that crowd thee so,
Even thou, who dost thy millions boast,
A village less than Islington wilt grow,
A solitude almost.”

of brick, with a church and bells; it has a small lake, or rather pond,¹ in the midst, though at present very much neglected. I am told it is dry in summer; if this be the case, it can be no very proper receptacle for fish, of which the inhabitants themselves seem sensible, by bringing all that is eaten there from London.

"After having surveyed the curiosities of this fair and beautiful town, I proceeded forward, leaving a fair stone building, called the White Conduit House,² on my right. Here the inhabitants of London often assemble to celebrate a feast of hot rolls and butter; seeing such numbers, each with their little tables before them, employed on this occasion, must, no doubt, be a very amusing sight to the looker-on, but still more so to those who perform in the solemnity.

"From hence I parted with reluctance to

¹ "Master Stephen.—What do you talk on it? Because I dwell at Hogsden, I shall keep company with none but the archers of Finsbury or the citizens that come ducking to Islington Ponds." —BEN JONSON, *Every Man in his Humour*.

² *27th March, 1664.*—Walked through the Ducking Pond Fields; but they are so altered since my father used to carry us to Islington, to the old man's, at the King's Head, to eat cakes and ale (his name was Pitts), that I did not know which was the Ducking Pond (*see* Ball's Pond) nor where I was."—PEPYS.

² A kind of minor Vauxhall, for Londoners who went for cakes and cream to Islington. The gardens lost their rank and reputation early in the present century; and the house, before it was pulled down (January, 1849) to make way for a new street, was nothing more than a large tavern, with a large room for suburban entertainments and political meetings.—See *The Bee*, No. II., and art. "White Conduit House" in CUNNINGHAM'S *Hand Book of London*, ed. 1850, p. 547.

Pancras,¹ as it is written, or *Pancridge*, as it is pronounced; but which should be both pronounced and written *Pangrace*: this emendation I will venture *meo arbitrio*; Παν, in the Greek language, signifies *all*, which, added to the English word *grace*, maketh *all grace*, or *Pangrace*; and, indeed, this is a very proper appellation to a place of so much sanctity as Pangrace is universally esteemed. However this be, if you except the parish church and its fine bells, there is little in Pangrace worth the attention of the curious observer.

“From Pangrace to Kentish Town is an easy journey of one mile and a quarter: the road lies through a fine champaign country, well watered with beautiful drains, and enamelled with flowers of all kinds, which might contribute to charm every sense, were it not that the odoriferous gales are often more impregnated with dust than perfume.

“As you enter Kentish Town, the eye is at once presented with the shops of artificers, such as venders of candles, small-coal, and hair-brooms;

¹ “Pancras Church standeth all alone, as utterly forsaken, old and weather-beaten, which, for the antiquity thereof, is thought not to yield to Paul’s in London. About this church have bin many buildings now decayed, leaving poor Pancras without companie or comfort, yet it is now and then visited with Kentishtowne and Highgate, which are members thereof; but they seldom come there, for they have chapels of ease within themselves; but when there is a corpse to be interred, they are forced to leave the same within this forsaken church or churchyard, where (no doubt) it resteth as secure against the day of resurrection, as if it laie in stately Paule’s.”—NORDEN, *Spec. Brit.*, 4to, 1593.

there are also several august buildings of red brick, with numberless sign-posts, or rather pillars, in a peculiar order of architecture; I send you a drawing of several, *vide* A. B. C. This pretty town probably borrows its name from its vicinity to the county of Kent; and, indeed, it is not unnatural that it should, as there are only London and the adjacent villages that lie between them. Be this as it will, perceiving night approach, I made a hasty repast on roasted mutton and a certain dried fruit called potatoes, resolving to protract my remarks upon my return: and this I would very willingly have done, but was prevented by a circumstance which, in truth, I had for some time foreseen; for, night coming on, it was impossible to take a proper survey of the country, as I was obliged to return home in the dark." Adieu.

LETTER CXXIII

THE CONCLUSION

To the Same

AFTER a variety of disappointments my wishes are at length fully satisfied. My son, so long expected, is arrived; at once, by his presence, banishing my anxiety and opening a new scene of unexpected pleasure. His improvements in mind and person have far surpassed even the sanguine expectation of a father. I left him a boy, but he is returned a man: pleasing in his person, hardened by travel, and polished by adversity. His disappointment in love, however, had infused an air of melancholy into his conversation, which seemed at intervals to interrupt our mutual satisfaction. I expected that this could find a cure only from time; but fortune, as if willing to load us with her favours, has in a moment repaid every uneasiness with rapture.

Two days after his arrival, the Man in Black, with his beautiful niece, came to congratulate us

upon this pleasing occasion; but guess our surprise when my friend's lovely kinswoman was found to be the very captive my son had rescued from Persia, and who had been wrecked on the Wolga, and was carried by the Russian peasants to the port of Archangel. Were I to hold the pen of a novelist, I might be prolix in describing their feelings at so unexpected an interview; but you may conceive their joy without my assistance. Words were unable to express their transports; then how can words describe it?

When two young persons are sincerely enamoured of each other, nothing can give me such pleasure as seeing them married: whether I know the parties or not, I am happy at thus binding one link more in the universal chain. Nature has, in some measure, formed me for a match-maker, and given me a soul to sympathise with every mode of human felicity. I instantly, therefore, consulted the Man in Black whether we might not crown their mutual wishes by marriage. His soul seems formed of similar materials with mine; he instantly gave his consent, and the next day was appointed for the solemnisation of their nuptials.

All the acquaintances which I had made since my arrival were present at this gay solemnity. The Little Beau was constituted master of the ceremonies, and his wife, Mrs. Tibbs, conducted the entertainment with proper decorum. The Man in Black and the pawnbroker's widow were

very sprightly and tender upon this occasion. The widow was dressed up under the direction of Mrs. Tibbs; and as for her lover, his face was set off by the assistance of a pig-tail wig, which was lent by the Little Beau, to fit him for making love with proper formality. The whole company easily perceived that it would be a double wedding before all was over, and, indeed, my friend and the widow seemed to make no secret of their passion; he even called me aside, in order to know my candid opinion, whether I did not think him a little too old to be married. "As for my own part," continued he, "I know I am going to play the fool, but all my friends will praise my wisdom, and produce me as the very pattern of discretion to others."

At dinner, everything seemed to run on with good humour, harmony, and satisfaction. Every creature in company thought themselves pretty, and every jest was laughed at. The Man in Black sat next his mistress, helped her plate, chimed her glass; and, jogging her knees and her elbow, he whispered something arch in her ear, on which she patted his cheek: never was antiquated passion so playful, so harmless, and amusing, as between this reverend couple.

The second course was now called for, and, among a variety of other dishes, a fine turkey was placed before the widow. The Europeans, you know, carve as they eat; my friend, therefore, begged his mistress to help him to a part of the

turkey. The widow, pleased with an opportunity of showing her skill in carving (an art upon which, it seems, she piqued herself), began to cut it up, by first taking off the leg. "Madam," cried my friend, "if I might be permitted to advise, I would begin by cutting off the wing, and then the leg will come off more easily." "Sir," replies the widow, "give me leave to understand cutting up a fowl; I always begin with the leg." "Yes, Madam," replies the lover, "but if the wing be the most convenient manner, I would begin with the wing." "Sir," interrupts the lady, "when you have fowls of your own, begin with the wing, if you please; but give me leave to take off the leg. I hope I am not to be taught at this time of day." "Madam," interrupts he, "we are never too old to be instructed." "Old, Sir!" interrupts the other, "who is old, Sir? When I die of age I know some that will quake for fear: if the leg does not come off, take the turkey to yourself." "Madam," replied the Man in Black, "I don't care a farthing whether the leg or the wing comes off; if you are for the leg first, why you shall have the argument, even though it be as I say." "As for the matter of that," cries the widow, "I don't care a fig whether you are for the leg off or on; and, friend, for the future keep your distance." "O," replied the other, "that is easily done; it is only removing to the other end of the table; and so, Madam, your most obedient humble servant."

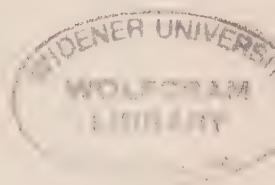
Thus was this courtship of an age destroyed in

one moment; for this dialogue effectually broke off the match between this respectable couple, that had been just concluded. The smallest accidents disappoint the most important treaties; however, though it in some measure interrupted the general satisfaction, it no ways lessened the happiness of the youthful couple, and by the young lady's looks I could perceive she was not entirely displeased with this interruption.

In a few hours, the whole transaction seemed entirely forgotten, and we have all since enjoyed those satisfactions which result from a consciousness of making each other happy. My son and his fair partner are fixed here for life; the Man in Black has given them up a small estate in the country, which, added to what I was able to bestow, will be capable of supplying all the real, but not the fictitious, demands of happiness. As for myself, the world being but one city to me, I do not much care in which of the streets I happen to reside: I shall, therefore, spend the remainder of my days in examining the manners of different countries, and have prevailed upon the Man in Black to be my companion. "They must often change," says Confucius, "who would be constant in happiness or wisdom." Adieu.

END OF PART II

END OF VOLUME V



WIDENER COLLEGE
LIBRARY
CHESTER, PENNSYLVANIA





1912

1913

1914 1915 1916 1917 1918



WIDENER UNIVERSITY
WOLFGAM MEMORIAL LIBRARY



3 3182 00010 2704

WOLF

PR

3481 .C8 1908 v.5 107014

DEMCO.

